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Title: Letter from Charles Nisbet to Ashbel Green

Date: October 14, 1794

Location: O-SpahrB-undated-6

Contact:

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Rev. & Dear Sir, I was favoured with yours of Sept." 12 "in due time, I thought I had sufficiently explained my Reasons for asking you to write me whether you had breaked my dethers with Consempt, or given thom to my Encouries to so me hard. My advarlances had to confidently afferled that they were in Pollopion of my detters, that the I know, both that you were incapable of belonging me, & that they had not the least acquaintance with your I needed to have formething to thow in my own Defence. Indeed if I had after you of my own accord, to write me whether you were an ho. nell Man or not, you might have juffly conceived it as an Infull of a very uncom. mon hind, but when I only alk you to vindicate your self against the Calumnico of my Enomies, who with'd to represent you as a Trailor, & myfelf as a Foot for have ing brutted you, I hope you will allow that this greatly allow the late. The encu Mauner in which I wrote you was a sufficient brook that I had an entire landidence in your briendthip, fidelity & Diferction, but I could not prevent the Immedence of my Advertaries, who stally affirmed that they were in Popletion of my Letter, A who think themselves wife & great Men, because they are Members of Congress & the State Legislature, & Imfrees of Colleges. We have had a qual army here which has almost cales in up, the I am afraid that they were not very well lerved. They have now marched to the Wellward, where I befored that they will be this work accommodated, than they were while here. I observed that the French Red Cap of Liberty is displayed in the Colours of our Militia, & the Intergents, I am informed, have Liberty & Equa lity inferited on their Colours & Poles of Sedition. This looks tomething vidiculous, that our Government which has given to unequivocal & to public an Approbation to the Cause of the French Roselutionists . Mould be obliged by the daw of Self-preserva. lion to take arms against their bellow bilizens, for acting on these very Principles which they have to often approved. You know that I believe that Government are perfectly right, on my Orinciples, but I am no less convinced that they are perfectly in the wrong, according to their own, as they are now in arms against the Authority of that very Sovereign Deople in their own Country, whose Conduct in France they have to often approved of Il is nothing to the Purpole to lay, that by the People they meant the Majority of the People, as they have given their decided approbation to the Revolution of the 10th August 1792, which was brought about by a Minority of 48 Men, without the Content or Anomicedae of the Majority. This Jeems to be a puzzling Question, how a Minorthy in France thould be the Sovereign People, & only a Parcel of Rebels or Injurgents in Ame. rica. It is time that our Government thould abandon the Defence of their supported

riends the Franch Revolutionills, when their Duchines have excited an Information against the beeft Government in the North. But the Question is how , after having committed them felves to far. May can retreat with Honour. But when Self-preferration has commelled them to take Arms against the Practice of the French Doctions, it ought to woll little brown He to renounce them in Theory. And now when Robertions have formally my owned them by culling his own Throat, which however Thomas Pains has forgot to enumerate among the Right of Man, it will be no Diparagement to American Politicians, to acknowledge that they have been wrong, & that the Contade of Kings combined against France, as not more quilly than the Ordital of the United States & the Troops under his Command, who are in Arms against the Friends of diberty & Equality, as well as the combined -Downs of Europe. This Infurrection ought to an are in our Dolitics, I il property improved, might leach our libigens that War is an wil despensive thing, as well as that they are not in a Condition to papportil, & that the Coppon of Hallering the Ocople as Sovereigns, is a natural laufe of Sedition, & Infurnctions. If our public Men did not think it their Interest to less the People a great Deal of Montente, which they themselves do not believe, we would never find such Haughlinch & Tyranny on the Part of the People . But when they are low by their breacherous & Jefith Leaders, that all Dower is in them, & that they have a Right to exercise it as they please, what can be more naturally expeded, than that they thould afterne & exercise that Tower to which they are affected that they have a Right, & like Thomas Paine, to add Practice to Theory. This is our Election Day, in which all the bee libigens of the fereral Sections of this Municipalityare to exercise the ineflimable Right & Privilege, of electing each a four thousand the Part of a Momber of allembly and a Seven thousandles Part of a Delegate in Congress and it is not to be doubted that they will conduct themselves with as much Wildom as the Trees of the Wood in Jotham's Parable, when they went to fet a thing over them. A Shocmaker, who is our Sherille is the landidate for longsels, who is led up by the Sovereign Ronle, on the Merit of having conducted their Mobs & Delibera. lions, & Liberty Pole Mechings, with confummate Judgment & exemplary Decency. Now as the Sloves were of Opinion, that every Nile Man is a Shoemaker, our People think it wident by a Parity of Reafon, that way Shoemaker must necessarily be a wife Man. Belides it may be expected that he will know what daws are prilable to his Constituents, as he has often taken the Measure of their feel for many 4cms pap. and as the Election happens to be on St. Crippin's Day, his Jucceps is confi. dend as certain. What an excellent longrep may you not expect, if all the other Counties & Diffrich had be posseped of as much Wifson! The assembling of the Army here has initated rather than intimidated the Sourceign Ronle . They lay

that we have had our Day , but that they hope to have their in their Jum , & thresten to do dreadful things , how loon the army is diffanded . May they affirm that the army will never return . I that the Western Royle have laid a Plan for destroying it by la. mine, without living a gun. In the mean time I hope that this Clan will not fucceed. & that the army having fufficiently experienced the latigues of War by bad Provisions & Accommodations, which must be the late, after all the lace that has been taken, will return in good health. I in a Disposition to vote for Peace, & lo discourage those detestable Doch sines of the Sovereignly of the Sconle that have coft them to much tolique, Danger and Expence, Exertions of this kind can not be expected to be prequent, & world from be mi. nous, but as long as we bruft our Defence to the Militia daws , especially if the Doctrine of the Sourceignly of the People thould continue to be believed by the greatest Mumber luch Exertions would be needpary almost every year. If our Ocople would lay afide their childith Orejudices, which have been to carefully encouraged by their fellith Leaders, they would now be convinced that these can be no Standing Government without a Handing army, & that we can only have our Election, whether we will have a Handing Army or a Handing Mob, as is the lafe in France. Three hundoed Regulars, Relieved at Billsburgh, might have fowed all the immense ace of the prefent Expedition, both to the public & to private Perfons, by decling & apprehending the Ringleaders of the Mob, before they had time to affemble in force. It is a Represach to our Church that all those Historicans who are concerned in this Infunccion, call themselves Oresbylerians, the it is evident that they have acted on French, and on Prophylerian Principles and as their Mini-Mess are popular, & highly Mudious of Popularity, it is impossible to believe that this Infunction could have been railed without their Countenance or Consivance, & except in the late of Mr. Clark alone, it has never been heard of that they gave any Discouragement to the late Rich, altho' I heard at that very time that one of them had excommunicated a young Woman for hearing a Man playing on a Fille, & the Man for having played in her heaving. In thost they feem to have acted as if They rally believed that a Duty on Spirits was highly detrimental to the Spiribual Interests of their Heavers . But I greatly properl that Religion , call it expe. rimental or what you please, that allows its Orosepor to destroy the Oroperty & expose the Lives of their Reighbours, & lo violate the Laws of their Country. From all buch Experimental Religion, Good dord deliver us! I am with Elecon,

Rev. 2 d Dear Sir, your very humble dervant Cha. Wisbel.

The Top of the Mark alone it has made here hard of that they Difference mand to the late think within I have not that may to me warred steering to hearing a their staging in a will his hours of the Hart thing from to me, and They rathly believed that a toly on Species were leavisly tothe months to the when entered of their House, But I make paper that their properties it is in which you proof, had all in a Reference to Litera the company these theoph one I to write the stone of their breaks

Revd & Dear Sir.

I was favoured with yours of Sept 12th in due time. I thought I had sufficiently explained my Reasons for asking you to write me whether you had treated my Letters with Contempt, or given them to my Enemies to do me hurt. My Adversaries had so confidently asserted that they were in Possession of my Letters, that tho! I knew, both that you were incapable of betraying me, & that they had not the least Acquaintance with you, I needed to have something to show in my Defence. Indeed if I had asked you of my own Accord, to write me whether you were an honest Man or not, you might have justly conceived it as an Insult of a very uncommon kind, but when I only ask you to vindicate your Self against the Calumnies of my Enemies, who wished to represent you as a Traitor, & myself as a Fool for having trusted you, I hope you will allow that this greatly alters the Case. The open Manner in which I wrote you was a sufficient Proof that I had an entire Confidence in your friendship, fidelity & Discretion, but I could not prevent the Impudence of my Adversaries, who flatly affirmed that they were in Possession of my Letters, & who think themselves wise & great men, because they are Members of Congress & the State Legislature, & Trustees of Colleges. We have had a great Army here which has almost eaten us up, tho' I am afraid that they were not very well served. They have now marched to the Westward, where I suspect that they will be still worse accommodated, than they were while here. I observed that the French Red Cap of Liberty is displayed in the Colours of our Militia, & the Insurgents, I am informed, have Liberty & Equality inscribed on their Colours & Poles [1] of Sedition.

This looks something ridiculous, that our Government which has given so unequivocal & so public an Approbation to the Cause of the French Revolutionists, should be obliged by the Law of Self-preservation to take Arms against their fellow Citizens, for acting on these very Principles - which they have so often approved. You know that I believe that Government are perfectly right, on my Principles, but I am no less convinced that they are prefectly in the wrong, according to their own, as they are now in Arms against the Authority of that very Sovereign People in their own Country, whose Conduct in France they have so often approved of. It is nothing to the Purpose to say, that by the People they meant the Majority of the People, as they have given their decided Approbation to the Revolution of the 10th August 1792, which was brought about by a Minority of 48 Men, without the Consent or Knowledge of the Majority. This seems to be a puzzling Question, how a Minority in France should be the Sovereign People, & only a Parcel of Rebels or Insurgents in America. It is time that our Government should abandon the Defence of their supposed friend, the French Revolutionists, when their Doctrines have excited an Insurrection against the freest Government in the World. But the Question is, how, after having committed themselves so far, they can retreat with Honour. But when Self-preservation has compelled them to take Arms against the Practice of the French Doctrines, it ought to cost little trouble to renounce them in Theory. And now when Robespierre has formally renounced them by cutting his own Throat, which however Thomas Paine has forgot to enumerate among the Rights of Man, it will be no Disparagement to American Politicians, to acknowledge that they have been wrong, & that the Crusade of Kings combined against France.

are not more guilty than the President of the United States & the Troops under his Command, who are in Arms against the Friends of Liberty & Equality, as well as the combined Powers of Europe. This Insurrection ought to [end] an Era in our Politics, & if properly improved, might teach our Citizens that War is an evil & expensive thing, as well as that they are not in a Condition to support it, & that the Custom of flattering the People as Sovereigns, is a natural Cause of Seditions & Insurrections. If our public Men did not think it their Interest to tell the People a great Deal of Nonsense, which they themselves do not believe, we would never find such Naughtiness & Tyranny on the Part of the People. But when they are told by their treacherous & Selfish Leaders, that all Power is in them, & that they have a Right to exercise it as they Please, what can be more naturally expected, than that they should assume & exercise that Power to which they are assured that they have a Right, & like Thomas Paine, to add Practice to Theory. This our Election Day, in which all the free Citizens of the several Sections of this Municipality are to exercise the inestimable Right & Privilege, of electing each a four thousandth Part of a Member of Assembly and a Seven thousandths Part of a Delegate in Congress. And it is not to be doubted that they will conduct themselves with as much Wisdom as the Trees of the Wood in Gotham's Parable, when they went to set a thing over them. A Shoemaker, who is our Sheriff, is the Candidate for Congress, who is set up by the Sovereign People, on the Merit of having conducted their Mobs & Deliberations, & Liberty Pole Meetings, with consummate Judgment & exemplary Decency. Now as the Stoics were of Opinion, that every Wise Man is a Shoemaker, our People think it evident by a parsity of Reason, that every Shoemaker must necessarily be

a Wise Man. Besides it may be expected that he will know what Laws are suitable to his Constituents, as he has often taken the Measure of their feet for many Years past. And as the Election happens to be on St. Crispin's Day, his success is considered as certain. What an excellent Congress may you not expect, if all the other Counties & Districts shall be possessed of as much Wisdom! The assembling of the Army here has irritated rather than intimidated the Sovereign People. They say that we have had our Day, but that they hope to have theirs in Their Turn, & threaten to do dreadful things, how soon the Army is disbanded. Nay they affirm that the Army will never return, & that the Western People have laid a Plan for destroying it by famine, without firing a Gun. In the mean time I hope that this Plan will not succeed. & that the Army having sufficiently experienced the fatigues of War by bad Provisions & Accomodations, which must be the Case, after all the Care that has been taken, will return in good health, & in a Disposition to vote for Peace, & to discourage those detestable Doctrines of the Sovereignity of the People that have cost them so much fatigue, Danger and Expence. Exertions of this kind can not be expected to be frequent, & would soon be minous [sic], but as long as we trust our Defence to the Militia Laws, especially if the Doctrine of the Sovereignty of the People should continue to be believed by the greatest Number such Exertions would be necessary almost every Year. If our People would lay agide their childish prejudices, which have been so carefully encouraged by their selfish Leaders, they would now be convinced that there can be no Standing Government without a standing Army, & that we can only have our Election, whether we will have a standing Army or a standing Mob, as is the Case in France. Three hundred Regulars

stationed at Pittsburgh, might have saved all the immense Expence of the present Expedition, both to the public & to private Persons, by catching ?, & apprehending the Kingleaders of the Mob, before they had time to assemble in force. It is a Keproach to our Church that all those Miscreants who are concerned in this Insurrection, call themselves Presbyterians, tho' it is evident that they have acted on French & not Presbyterian Principles, and as their Ministers are popular, & highly studious of Popularity, it is impossible to believe that this Insurrection could have been raised without their Countenance or Connivance, & except in the Case of Mr. Clark alone, it has never been heard of that they gave any Discouragement to the late Riots, altho! I heard at that very time that one of them had excommunicated a young Woman for hearing a Man playing on a Fiddle, & the Man for having played in her hearing. In short they seem to have acted as if they really believed that a Duty on Spirits was highly detrimental to the Spiritual Interests of their Hearers. But I greatly suspect that Keligion, call it experimental or what you please, that allows its Professors to destroy the Property & expose the Lives of their Neighbours, & to violate the Laws of their Country. From all such Experimental Religion, Good Lord deliver us ! I am with Esteem,

Rev. & Dear Sir,

Your very humble ServantCHA. NISBET