A Proposal to Free the Slaves, Fredericksburg, Va., June 9, 1775 (excerpt)

. . . To proclaim instant Freedom to all [indentured] Servants that will join in the Defence of America, is a Measure to be handled with great Delicacy, as so great, so immediate a Sacrafice of Property, may possibly draw off many of the Americans themselves from the common Cause.

But is not such a Measure absolutely necessary? And might not a proper Equivalent be made to the Masters, out of the Large Sums of Money which at all Events must be struck, in the present Emergency?

If America should neglect to do this, will not Great Britain engage these Servants to espouse her Interest, by proclaiming Freedom to them, without giving any Equivalent to the Masters? To give Freedom to the Slaves is a more dangerous, but equally necessary Measure.

Is it not incompatible with the glorious Struggle America is making for her own Liberty, to hold in absolute Slavery a Number of Wretches, who will be urged by Despair on one Side, and the most flattering Promises on the other, to become the most inveterate Enemies to their present Masters?

If the Inhabitants of Quebec should assist Great Britain, would not true Wisdom dictate to the other Colonies, to lead their Slaves to the Conquest of that Country, and to bestow that and Liberty upon them as a Reward for their Bravery and Fidelity?

Might not a considerable Quit Rent reserved upon their Lands, and a moderate Tax upon their Labours, stipulated beforehand, in a Course of Years, sink the Money struck, and refund to the Colonies the Price of the Slaves now paid to their Masters for their Freedom?

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