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THE DUTY OF STANDING FAST IN OUR

SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL

LIBERTIES,

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SERMON,

PREACHED IN CHRIST-CHURCH,

JULY 7th, 1775.

Before the FIRST BATTALION of the City and
Liberties of PHILADELPHIA;

And published at their Request.

By the REVEREND

JACOB DUCHÉ, M. A.

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MDCCLXXV.

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TO HIS
EXCELLENCY
GEORGE WASHINGTON,
ESQUIRE,
GENERAL AND COMMANDER IN CHIEF
OF ALL THE FORCES
OF THE
UNITED ENGLISH COLONIES
IN NORTH AMERICA,
THIS SERMON,
AS
A SMALL TRIBUTE OF RESPECT
FOR
HIS MANY AMIABLE VIRTUES
AS WELL IN
PRIVATE AS IN PUBLIC LIFE,
IS
MOST HUMBLY AND AFFECTIONATELY
INSCRIBED
BY THE AUTHOR.

P R A Y E R before S E R M O N.

O THOU infinitely great and glorious God! whose providential sway extendeth over all thy works! GOD of the armies of HEAVEN! guardian GOD of nations, as well as individuals here upon EARTH!

Look down in mercy, we beseech thee, upon the whole human race! and hasten that glorious period, in which all the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of the LORD and of his CHRIST!

Show down thy peculiar blessings upon the universal church, even the whole congregation of christian people, to whatever sect or denomination they may belong!

And herein, accept our most fervent prayers in behalf of thy servant, but our dread Sovereign Lord King GEORGE. Endue him plenteously with heavenly gifts, and grant him in health and wealth long to live! Inspire him with the true spirit of wisdom and government! Teach him, that his highest temporal glory must consist in

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preserving to a free people their undoubted birth-rights as men; and as Britons!

Remove far from his Royal Person all those, who would seek to change his government into oppression, and to gratify their own licentious desires at the expence of the blood and treasure of his subjects!

Surround him with counsellors eminent for their piety and virtue, well acquainted with, and well affected to our happy constitution, equally distinguished for their exemplary conduct in private life, and their disinterested attention to the public weal!

Extend thy compassionate regards to the whole body of his subjects, as well in Great-Britain and Ireland as in these his American dominions. Heal, O Father of mercies, heal, we beseech thee, our present unhappy divisions! Let us once more rejoice in that delightful union and intercourse which hath heretofore subsisted betwixt us and our Parent-land; and remove every envious obstacle, that may yet hinder us from embracing as brethren of the same family!

For this most desirable purpose, we pray, that thou would be in a peculiar manner present with all those, who are entrusted with our great American

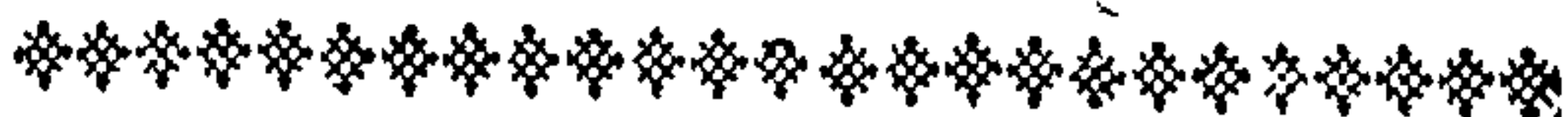
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rican cause, as well in council as in the field! Give them wisdom to devise, and firmness to execute, such measures for the restoration of public peace and harmony, as may consist with that true Liberty, which is equally removed from base licentiousness on the one hand, and as base submission and slavery on the other!

And, while we are thus contending for our temporal rights, O suffer us not to forget, or be less zealous for those more important spiritual privileges, which have been purchased for us by a Redeemer's blood! deliver us from the bondage of our corruption! Enable us to stand fast in our gospel freedom! And, after seeking first the establishment of thy Kingdom and the righteousness thereof in our hearts, may we hope and trust with full confidence in thee, our God and Father, that all other blessings of a temporal nature will be added unto us!

These things we ask, not for any merits of our own, but for the sake and through the merits of the dear son of thy love CHRIST JESUS our LORD, in whose most blessed name and words, we humbly and affectionately address Thee, as

“ Our Father which art in Heaven! &c.



S E R M O N, &c.

GALATIANS, CHAP. V.

Part of FIRST Verse.

*Stand fast, therefore, in the Liberty wherewith
Christ hath made us free.*

GENTLEMEN of the FIRST BATTALION
of the City and Liberties of PHILADELPHIA,

THOUGH I readily accepted of the invitation, with which you were pleased to honour me, and am fully satisfied that there can be no impropriety in complying with your request, yet I confess, that I now feel such an uncommon degree of diffidence, as nothing but a sense of duty, and a sincere sympathy with you in your present trying circumstances, could enable me to overcome.

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The occasion is of the first importance : the subject in a great measure new to me—Throwing myself, therefore, upon your candor and indulgence, considering myself under the twofold character of a minister of JESUS CHRIST, and a FELLOW-CITIZEN of the same state, and involved in the same public calamity with yourselves ; and looking up for counsel and direction to the source of all wisdom, “ *who giveth liberally to those that ask it* ”—I have made choice of a passage of scripture, which will give me an opportunity of addressing myself to you as FREEMEN, both in the spiritual and temporal sense of the word ; and of suggesting to you such a mode of conduct, as will be most likely, under the blessing of Heaven, to ensure to you the enjoyment of these two kinds of Liberty. *Stand fast, therefore, in the Liberty, wherewith Christ hath made us free.*

The inspired Author of this excellent Admonition was so sensible of the invaluable blessings and comforts that resulted from that free spirit, with which JESUS CHRIST through his Ministry, had established his Galatian Converts, that he was jealous of the least attempt to destroy or even obstruct

obstruct in them its life-giving operation. He could not brook the narrow spirit of those Judaizing Christians, who, from the most selfish and illiberal motives, sought to force a yoke upon the necks of their Gentile Brethren, which neither they themselves nor their Fathers had been able to bear. These Gentiles too he severely reproveth for not maintaining their ground, and asserting their Gospel Freedom against the insidious devices of their Brethren, who only wanted to bring them into servitude, "*that they might glory in their flesh.*"—"O foolish Galatians! who hath bewitched you?" He ascribes their blindness and infatuation to some diabolical charm, which had locked up the powers of their free-born spirits, and made them tamely submit to slavish, carnal ordinances, which the Gospel of JESUS had entirely exploded and abolished. He reminds them, by a spirited explication of a most striking allegory, that they were not "*children of the bond-woman, but of the free;*" that their observance of the ceremonial law was a tribute, which they were not bound to pay; or, if they should be so weak as to submit to it, that it could not emancipate them from the bondage of earth and hell; but that their real freedom, their
full

full and compleat justification, their happiness temporal and eternal, were only to be acquired by a vigorous exertion of those spiritual powers within themselves, which, through the riches of God's free grace in CHRIST JESUS, had been communicated to their souls. He concludes this part of his address with the truly noble and apostolical precept of my text: *Stand fast, therefore, in the Liberty, wherewith Christ hath made us free.*

Having thus briefly opened the occasion and meaning of the words, I shall proceed to shew, in the first place, what we are to understand by that *spiritual Liberty*, "*wherewith Christ hath made us free,*" and what kind of conduct that must be, which is here expressed by the words "*stand fast.*"

I. However severe, my dear Brethren, the loss of our temporal Liberties may be, there is certainly a Bondage far more severe than this, yea, far more cruel than that of ISRAEL under their EGYPTIAN Task-masters. A Bondage, not only to men, but to the fallen spirits of darkness, seeking to exercise over us a joint power and dominion

minion with our own irregular and corrupt passions. A Bondage universal, from which no Son of Adam hath ever been exempt; a tyranny, whose baleful influences have been felt from the fall of man down to this very day. It has seized not only upon the body, but upon the soul. It has erected its throne in the heart, and from thence imposes its arbitrary decrees. It is confined to no age or sex, no state or condition of human life. High and low, learned and unlearned, the savage and the sage, are alike the victims of this despotic power, alike slaves by nature under this bondage of corruption.

It is perpetually manifesting itself under a variety of forms, according to our prevailing desires and pursuits. It follows us into the Sanctuary of God. It steals into our private devotions. It gives a pharisaical tincture to our best good works. It reigns as a master and absolute Sovereign in the wicked and unregenerate. Yea, it frequently enters the most spiritual and regenerate hearts in hostile form, and seeks to shake their confidence in the goodness of their true and rightful Sovereign, and their humble hope of deliver-

deliverance through the redeeming power of his ever-blessed Son.

Now, who would not wish to be delivered from such a bondage as this? And yet, my brethren, such a wish cannot be formed, 'till, by divine grace, the free-born powers of the soul are brought to be sensible of their burden, and to groan beneath the weight of oppression. "*The whole* (or they that think themselves whole) *need not a Physician, but they that are sick.*" The madman hugs his chains, as if they were ensigns of royalty. Insensible of his calamity, he cannot even wish for relief.

But no sooner does the child of grace, the offspring of Heaven, come to feel the bondage of the infernal usurper; no sooner does he find himself harrassed and oppressed by the obedience which he exacts to his unrighteous laws; no sooner is he convinced, that such an obedience must terminate in everlasting slavery and wretchedness, than he awakens from his sleep of security, and turns to and avails himself of that light, and strength, and spiritual courage, and constancy, which his Redeemer is ever at hand to im-

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part, and without which he feels himself absolutely unequal to the conflict, and incapable of extricating himself from the ignoble servitude.

From hence then it appears, that the *Liberty, with which Christ hath made us free*, is nothing less than such a release from the arbitrary power of sin, such an enlargement of the soul by the efficacy of divine grace, and such a total surrender of the will and affections, to the influence and guidance of the divine Spirit, (*“for we are made a willing people in the day of God’s power”*) as will enable us to live in the habitual chearful practice of every grace and virtue here, and qualify us for the free, full and uninterrupted enjoyment of heavenly life and Liberty hereafter.

These glorious privileges being once obtained, the sinner being once justified, and adopted into the family of God, and having received the seal of his heavenly citizenship, the conduct recommended to him in my text, as the most effectual for the preservation of these privileges, is here expressed by the words *“Stand fast :”* that is to say :

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“Maintain, firm and unshaken, the ground which CHRIST hath given you. Be ever vigilant and prepared against the open or insidious attacks of your adversary.”

He is not commanded to march upon the Devil's ground, to seek out the tempter or the temptation, in order to make a trial of his strength, or merely that he may have the honour of a victory: But only to “*stand fast,*” to act upon the defensive, and armed at all points with a celestial panoply, to be ready to resist and repel the most daring attempts of his perfidious foe: as well knowing, that if he suffers himself to be taken captive, slavery and woe must be his everlasting portion; but, if he comes off conqueror from the conflict, that the life, liberty and joys of Heaven will be his everlasting reward.

Thus far have I travelled in in a well known path, and spoken a language familiar to most of you, and which you have long been accustomed to hear from this Pulpit.

II. I am

II. I am now to strike into another path, which, though it may not always terminate in such glorious scenes of never-ending felicity as the former, yet, if stedfastly pursued, will conduct the sons of men to an happiness, of an inferior kind indeed, but highly necessary to their present temporary state of existence in this world.

If SPIRITUAL LIBERTY calls upon its pious Votaries to extend their views far forward to a glorious **HEREAFTER**, CIVIL LIBERTY must at least be allowed to secure, in a considerable degree, our well-being **HERE**. And I believe it will be no difficult matter to prove, that the latter is as much the gift of **GOD** in **CHRIST JESUS** as the former, and consequently that we are bound to stand fast in our **CIVIL** as well as our **SPIRITUAL FREEDOM**.

From what hath been said under my first head of discourse, I think it must appear, that **LIBERTY**, traced to her true source, is of heavenly extraction, that divine **Virtue** is her illustrious parent, that from eternity to eternity they have been and must be inseparable companions, and

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that

that the hearts of all intelligent beings are the living temples, in which they ought to be jointly worshipped.

We have the authority of divine Revelation to assert, that this globe of earth was once the favoured spot, on which she was sent to reside, and that the first man felt and enjoyed her divine influence within and around him. But the same Revelation tells us, what our own experience cannot but confirm, that when man lost his virtue, he lost his Liberty too; and from that fatal period, became subject to the bondage of corruption, the slave of irregular passions, at war with himself and his own species, an alien from his native country, a sorrowful stranger and a weary pilgrim in this world of woe.

It was not only to put him into a capacity of regaining his forfeited heavenly bliss, but to mitigate, likewise, the sorrows of his earthly sojourn, that the EVERLASTING JESUS, in and by whom God originally created man, vouchsafed to communicate to him, when fallen, a ray of hope, a spark of heavenly light, wisdom, power and goodness; by which, through the effectual work-

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ings of his grace, he might, in future time, inspire him and his hapless posterity with such principles as would lead them to know, contend for and enjoy Liberty in its largest, noblest extent.

Whate'er of order, truth, equity and good government is to be found among the sons of men, they are solely indebted for to this EVER-LASTING COUNSELLOR, this PRINCE OF PEACE. By nature surrounded with innumerable wants, which his own single unassisted hand could by no means supply, exposed to innumerable dangers, which his utmost strength and sharpest foresight could not possibly ward off, it must surely have been this WISDOM OF THE FATHER, that first taught man, by SOCIAL COMPACT, to secure to himself the possession of those necessities and comforts, which are so dear and valuable to his natural life. And though no particular mode of government is pointed out to us in his holy gospel, yet the benevolent spirit of that gospel is directly opposed to every other form, than such as has the COMMON GOOD of mankind for its end and aim.

Now

Now this COMMON GOOD is matter of COMMON FEELING. And hence it is, that our best writers, moral and political, as well Clergy as Laity, have asserted, that true government can have no other foundation than COMMON CONSENT. 'Tis the power, the wisdom, the majesty of the people committed to ONE, to a FEW, or to MANY—yea, in some hitherto favoured states, the ONE, the FEW, and the MANY, have been entrusted together, that they might mutually controul and be controuled by each other.

Inasmuch, therefore, as this solemn Delegation was intended for the good of the whole; inasmuch as all Rulers are in fact the Servants of the Public, and appointed for no other purpose than to be “*A terror to evil-doers, and a praise to them that do well;*” whenever this divine order is inverted, whenever these Rulers abuse their sacred trust, by unrighteous attempts to injure, oppress, and enslave those very persons, from whom alone, under God, their power is derived—does not humanity, does not reason, does not scripture call upon the Man, the Citizen, the Christian of such a community to “*stand fast in that Liberty wherewith Christ* (in their
very

very birth, as well as by succeeding appointments of his Providence) *bath made them free?*?

The Apostle enjoins us to “*submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake.*” But surely a submission to the unrighteous ordinances of unrighteous men, cannot be “*for the Lord’s sake.*” For “*He loveth Righteousness, and his Countenance beholds the things that are just.*”

Possessed, therefore, of these principles—Principles, upon which the present constitution of BRITAIN was happily settled at one of her most glorious and memorable æras, and upon which alone it can still be supported—Possessed of these principles, I trust it will be no difficult matter to satisfy your consciences with respect to the righteousness of the cause in which you are now engaged.

The struggle, ’tis true, is an unnatural one. The hard necessity of standing upon our defence against our brethren, children of the same family, educated in the same manners, the same religion with ourselves, bound together by a long reciprocation of endearing offices, by a long participation

icipation of common blessings, and of common dangers and distresses, mutually protecting and protected by each other.—The hard necessity, I say, of defending ourselves, our just and undoubted rights against such unnatural adversaries, (though sadly to be lamented, as one of the heaviest judgments with which Heaven could visit us for our iniquities) ought not, however, to make us surrender at discretion, or discourage us from “*standing fast in that Liberty, wherewith Christ (as the great providential governor of the world) hath made us free.*”

We venerate the Parent Land from whence our progenitors came. We wish to look up to her as the GUARDIAN, not the INVADER of her children's rights. We glory in the name of children. But then we wish to be treated as children—And children too, that have arrived at years of discretion.

But, if we are to judge from the late ungenerous and ill-digested plans of policy, which have been adopted by those whom she hath entrusted with the powers of Administration, we
cannot

cannot but think, that they began to be jealous of our rising glory, and, from an ill-grounded apprehension of our aiming at independency, were desirous of checking our growth.

Yet why this unseasonable and unrighteous jealousy? We wish not to interfere with that commercial system, which they have hitherto pursued. We have not even stretched our expectations beyond the line which they themselves had drawn. We wish not to possess the golden groves of Asia, to sparkle in the public eye with jewels torn from the brows of weeping Nabobs, or to riot on the spoils of plundered provinces.* We rather tremble for the parent
state,

* Here perhaps it may be objected, that the Americans do with a very ill grace censure their English brethren, either for their iniquitous conquests in Asia, or for the luxuries thereby introduced among them, whilst they themselves are rioting upon the labour of thousands of their own species, torn away from their native retreats, from their dearest relations and friends, and doomed to a most abject and perpetual slavery.

In answer to this objection it may be asked—Where did this infamous commerce originate? And where is it still carried on with all the eagerness which avarice can inspire? Where, but in England?—By what means can it be abolished? Surely by that power alone, which America acknowledges the parent state may justly exercise over all her dominions, viz. the power of regulating their trade.—

state, and would fain keep off from our own borders, these luxuries, which may perhaps already have impaired her constitutional vigour. We only wish, that what we have, we may be able to call OUR OWN ; that those fruits of honest industry, which our ancestors had acquired, or those which have been, or may be added to them by the sweat of our own brows, should not be wrested from us by the hand of violence, but left to our own free disposal ; satisfied as we are in our consciences, that when CONSTITUTIONALLY called upon, we shall not give “ GRUDGINGLY OR OF NECESSITY,” but cheerfully and liberally.

And

Is it not well known, that the legislatures of some of the colonies have done what they could to put a stop to the importation of African slaves, by loading it with the heaviest duties? And that others have attempted the total abolition of it, by acts of assembly, which their Governor refused to pass, have then petitioned the parent state for new instructions to their Governors on this head, and after all, have failed of success?

It is however, devoutly to be wished, that when a happy reconciliation once takes place, this poisonous branch may entirely be shut out, before our great commercial stream becomes so infected by the contagion, as to endanger the health and security of the whole empire.

And as to any pretensions to, or even desire of independency, have we not openly disavowed them in all our petitions, representations and remonstrances? Have we not repeatedly and solemnly professed an inviolable loyalty to the person, power, and dignity of our SOVEREIGN; and unanimously declared, that it is not with HIM we contend, but with an envious Cloud of FALSE WITNESSES, that surround his throne, and intercept the sunshine of his favour from our oppressed Land?

If, notwithstanding all this, BRITAIN, or rather some degenerate sons of BRITAIN, and enemies to our common Liberty, still persist in embracing a DELUSION, and believing a LIE—if the sword is still unsheathed against us, and SUBMIT OR PERISH is the sanguinary decree—why then

I CANNOT close the sentence—Indulge a Minister of JESUS!—My soul shrinks back with horror from the tragic scene of fraternal slaughter—and the free spirit of the citizen is arrested by the tenderness of Gospel Love.—GRACIOUS GOD! stop the precious effusion of British and American blood—too precious

to be spilt in any other cause than the joint interest of both against a common foe! —

Pained, as I am at this melancholy prospect, I mean not, however, to decline addressing you in your military capacity, and suggesting such a conduct for the preservation of your temporal rights, as by the blessing of Heaven, will be most likely to ensure you success.

“STAND FAST” then.

I. “*Stand fast*” by a strong Faith and Dependence upon JESUS CHRIST, the great Captain of your Salvation. Enlist under the Banner of his Cross. And let this motto be written upon your hearts: *In hoc signo vinces*, “*Under this Standard thou shalt overcome.*”

II. “*Stand fast*” by a virtuous and unshaken UNANIMITY. Of such an unanimity, you have a most striking example now before your eyes — three millions of people, or a vast majority of them, bound by no other ties than those of honour and public virtue, voluntarily submitting to the wise Political Determinations of an Honourable

nourable Council of Delegates assembled by their own free and unbiaſſed choice. Avail yourselves of this illustrious example. Be unanimous in your particular department. And as one refractory ſpirit may defeat the beſt-deviſed plan of operations, and throw your whole Corps into confuſion, ſee that this unanimity be productive of a juſt and becoming SUBORDINATION.

Remember, the Gentlemen who command you are your Neighbours, Friends and Fellow-Citizens, who have their ALL at ſtake as well as you. Their authority has not been impoſed upon you. They were inveſted with it by yourſelves. 'Tis ſurely your part then to ſupport them in the juſt execution of it; not doubting, but that on their part they will always conſider, that they are not called to lord it over mercenaries, but affectionately to command Freemen and Fellow-Sufferers. Accuſtom yourſelves, therefore, to diſcipline now; or elſe, when the day of trial comes, (which Heaven avert!) you will too late lament your unhappy neglect.

III. “*Stand faſt*” by an undaunted COURAGE and MAGNANIMITY. And here give me leave
to

to remind you, that there is a kind of courage, which seems to be merely animal or constitutional.—This may stand a Soldier in good stead perhaps for a few moments amid the heat and fury of a battle, when his blood and spirits are set on fire by the warlike sound of drums and trumpets. But I would have you possessed of more than this, even a courage that will prove you to be good Christians, as well as good Soldiers, a firm invincible fortitude of soul, founded upon religion, and the glorious hope of a better world; a courage, that will enable you not only to withstand an armed phalanx, to pierce a squadron, or force an entrenchment, when the cause of virtue and your country calls you to such a service, but will support you, likewise, against the principalities and powers of darkness, will stand by you under the assaults of pain and sickness, and give you firmness and consolation amid all the horrors of a death-bed scene.

Such a courage as this too will always be tempered with prudence, humanity, and greatness of soul. It will never degenerate into savage cruelty and barbarity. If to spread undistin-
guishing

gulshing ruin and devastation through a country; if with more than Gothic rage, to break into the sweet retreats of domestic felicity, and drive the aged and the helpless from their once quiet habitations——O my God! if this be heroism, if this be military virtue——suffer not our people to learn the destructive art. Let them rather continue to be injured and oppressed themselves, than taught thus wantonly to injure and oppress others. This caution, however, is unnecessary to you. Permit me, then, only to observe, that in our present circumstances, we contend not for Victory, but for Liberty and Peace.

Nor let me dismiss this head of advice without reminding you of the glorious stand that hath been already made for us by our northern Brethren, and calling upon you to thank Heaven for his great and gracious interposition. Surely “*the Lord of Hosts was with them,*”——surely “*the God of Jacob was their refuge.*”——Drop a pious tear to the memory of the illustrious slain——and let them yet live in the annals of American Freedom.

Lastly,

Lastly; “ *Stand fast*” by a steady **CONSTANCY** and **PERSEVERANCE**. Difficulties unlooked for may yet arise, and trials present themselves sufficient to shake the utmost firmness of human fortitude. Be prepared, therefore, for the worst. Suffer not your spirits to evaporate by too violent an ebullition now. Be not too eager to bring matters to an extremity; lest you should be wearied out by a continued exertion, and your constancy should fail you at the most important crisis. Coolly and deliberately wait for those events which are in the hands of Providence, and depend upon him alone for strength and expedients-suited to your necessities.

In a word, my Brethren—though the worst should come—though we should be deprived of all the conveniencies and elegancies of life—though we should be cut off from all our usual sources of commerce, and constrained, as many of our poor Brethren have already been, to abandon our present comfortable habitations—let us, nevertheless, “ *stand fast*” as the Guardians of **LIBERTY**—And though we should not be able to entertain the Heaven-born Maid, with such affluence and splendor, as we have hitherto done, let us still keep close to her side, as
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our inseparable companion, preserve her from the violence of her adversaries, and, if at last necessary, be content to retire with her to those peaceful, though homely retreats of rural life, in which she was first entertained by our venerable Ancestors——determined to contend to the very last for such an illustrious Prize; and never to part with her, but for the more sure and compleat enjoyment of her blessings in a World of Glory.

“ Now, therefore, be strong, O Zerubabel, and be strong, O Joshua, the son of Josedech the High-priest, and be strong, O ye Counsellors, Generals, and People of the Land; For I am with you, saith the Lord of Hosts.—Look unto me and be saved, all ye ends of the earth!” Even so, grant, thou great and glorious God, that to thee only we may look, and from thee experience that deliverance, which we ask, not for any merits of our own, but for the sake and through the merits of the dear Son of thy love CHRIST JESUS our Lord! To whom, with thee, O FATHER, and thee O BLESSED SPIRIT! Three persons in one eternal God, be ascribed all honour, praise, and dominion, now, henceforth, and forever!

F I N I S.