

The STAMP-ACT REPEALED;

A

S E R M O N,

Preached in the MEETING at SAVANNAH in
GEORGIA, June 25th, 1766.

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THE SECOND EDITION.

Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only
use not liberty as an occasion to the flesh.

But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed
that ye be not consumed one of another. GALAT.
V. 13, 15.

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TEXT. ZECHARIAH viii. 10, 11, 12.

For before these days there was no hire for man, nor any hire for beast; neither was there any peace to him that went out, or came in, because of the affliction: for I set all men every one against his neighbour. But now I will not be unto the residue of this people as in the former days, saith the LORD of hosts. For the seed shall be prosperous: the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew: and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things.

IT is remarkable that after *Israel* had conquered all their enemies, and taken possession of the land promised unto their fathers, they were very near breaking out into a civil war among themselves, and no sooner were they freed of any apprehension from powerful and troublesome neighbours, but the spirit of discord had well nigh succeeded in transferring the seat of war into their own bowels. We have an account of this important event in the 22d chapter of the Book of *Joshua*, and the sum of it amounts to this: The tribes of *Reuben*, *Gad*, and half the tribe of *Manasseh*, being settled on one, and all the rest of the tribes on the other side of the waters of *Jordan*, the former thought it necessary to erect an altar on the borders of their frontier, thereby to testify that the *Jordan* was their
A 2 boundary,

boundary, yet they were the same people, united by the same ties, natural, religious and political, and that they meant by this altar to inculcate and impress with these sentiments the minds of their latest posterity. The rest of the nation however took the alarm at their proceedings, looked upon this as a step towards independency, and separation from the rest of their brethren, and as they considered the matter in this view, it could not appear otherwise to them but exceeding alarming. Accordingly we are told, when the children of *Israel* heard of it, the whole congregation gathered themselves to go up to war against them; *Jos. xxii. 12*, their minds were thoroughly enflamed, and every thing ready for blood and slaughter. Among all this enraged multitude it seems there were yet some men of moderation, and their lenient and healing counsels were the saving of the people. These tribes were but lately returned from acting the part of faithful auxiliaries to their brethren; it was not at all probable that those meant to separate their interests from that of the whole stock, who had given such signal proofs of their attachment to the rest; before things are carried to the last extremity, a solemn message is sent to the suspected tribes, and when they came rightly to understand one another, the fidelity of the three distinct tribes fully appeared, and, instead of looking upon them as offenders, we are told their answer pleased those sent among them, *And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the children of Manasseh, This day*

day we perceive that the LORD is among us, because ye have not committed this trespass against the LORD: now ye have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the LORD. And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, and the princes, returned from the children of Reuben, and from the children of Gad, out of the land of Gilead, unto the land of Canaan, to the children of Israel, and brought them word again. And the thing pleased the children of Israel; and the children of Israel blessed God, and did not intend to go up against them in battle, to destroy the land wherein the children of Reuben and Gad dwelt; Jos. xxii. 31, 32, 33.

The spark which had like to kindle so great a fire was seasonably extinguished, a good understanding and mutual harmony restored, every man returned to his home and lived quietly under his vine and fig tree in the land which God had so lately given unto them.

Methinks whoever peruses this account with attention may perceive some paralell between the case of *Israel* and what was lately our own.

You all know that for some time past the situation between us and our brethren on the other side of the water has been exceeding alarming. Complaints ran high, and it was even talked of that the ten tribes intended to go to war against their brethren, and that notwithstanding during a very late war these had given every possible token of loyalty and attachment. An unhappy ill-advised act of the *British* legislature laid the foundation of our griefs, and it seemed as tho' the continuance of that act and an universal alienation of minds must go hand
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in hand, the consequences of which might easily be foreseen, they are not to be expressed, because they cannot be thought of without horror.

There were not wanting in *Britain*, nor yet in *America*, some of the descendants of the young counsellors of *Rehoboam* who would have convinced us of the justice of that act by deadly arguments, and would not have been unwilling to see *America* ruled with a rod of iron, but blessed be God who defeated their counsels, who placed a king on the *British* throne as tender of the liberty of the subject as jealous of the glory of his own government; blessed be God in whose hands are the hearts of all men, that he inclined the *British* parliament to hear the cries of the innocent, and, by a just, noble, and generous repeal of that ill-concerted measure, to dissipate our fears, remove our difficulties, restore our confidence, to give us a pleasing opportunity to offer our publick thanks unto *Britain's* God, and, like on the jubilee of old, to proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all the inhabitants thereof.

I do not know any event ever happened to *British-America* more deserving of a publick day of thanksgiving throughout all that wide extended empire, and I would in the most serious manner call upon my congregation to offer thanks unto the Most High, because he has been favourable unto our land, and also to make a proper return to our most gracious king, and the *British* legislature, for the removing of our shoulders from the burden, and delivering our hands from the pots: *My heart*
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is toward the governors of Israel that offered themselves willingly among the people. Bless ye the LORD. They that were delivered from the noise of archers in the places of drawing water; there shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the LORD, even the righteous acts towards the inhabitants of his villages in Israel: then shall the people of the LORD go down to the gates.
Judges v. 9, 11.

The words which I have read unto you will afford us ample matter for suitable meditation on this happy event; they are words of God himself, and in their first intention are designed to put *Israel* in mind of the pleasing change of their publick affairs from the time they had begun to lay the foundation of the temple: Before that time we are told there was no hire for man nor beast, no peace in all their border, and the hand of God against them to visit them with severe afflictions; and after that God declares, that he will be no longer to them as in days past, that now they may expect every kind of blessing, and that the remnant of the nation should henceforth possess and enjoy all these things.

As these words are expressive of the gloomy state of the nation before that period, and the pleasing prospect now offered, they will want but very little accommodation to our present purpose.

My business therefore, under divine assistance, will be to

Take some notice of the day of *Jacob's* trouble, and the melancholy state of the remnant of *Judah* while the hand of the LORD was against them.

I would, in the next place, make a few remarks on the great and precious promises given unto the penitent remnant of the *Jewish* nation. And, lastly,

Endeavour to make some improvement on the whole suitable to the design of our present meeting.

May I be enabled to speak on these things in a becoming manner, and may we not dare to put God off with a little outward shew, or the empty formality of this meeting, but may we offer up soul and body unto our sovereign benefactor and preserver; may this be the tribute of our gratitude and our reasonable service!

Mercies received appear the greater when they come after a long and painful want; the return of the light is the more acceptable for the preceeding darkness; and so God here puts them in mind of the distress under which they laboured till now, that the promise of peace and plenty might be the more welcome. If we consider the words in their full extent they may lead us back to the state of the nation at and during the invasion of the *Chaldeans*, and before *Judah* was carried into captivity; then indeed there was no hire for man nor beast, no peace to him that came in nor went out: Besides the scourge of war, *Judah* also suffered by drought and famine: *Judah mourneth, and the gates thereof languish: they are black unto the ground; because the ground was chapt, for there was no rain in the earth, the plowmen were ashamed, they covered their heads; Jer. xiv. 2, 4.* All this calamity increased

creased in proportion as the *Chaldeans* got the country in their possession, and laid a close siege to the holy city and to their sanctuary. This mournful description was more than once applicable to the land of *Judah*, and it is mentioned as one of their usual afflictions when they departed from God; *In those times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the countries*, 2 Chron. xv. 5. It is true indeed by this time the days of captivity were accomplished, a number of them returned to the land of their fathers, but even on their return their situation was still deplorable, and their difficulties exceeding great; *Jerusalem* was a heap of stones, and all the country around a mere desolation; they met with opposition from the *Samaritans*, and all their afflictions had not yet made them wise enough to agree among themselves; their neglect also in building the house of God had brought on them very severe judgments; they looked for much and it came to little, and when they brought even that little home God did blow upon it; when a man came to an heap of twenty measures there were but ten, and when one came to the wine press to draw out fifty vessels there were but twenty, and all this because the house of the LORD lay waste, and every man ran to his own house; *Haggai* i. 9. ii. 16. Such was their wretched state at the time of this prophecy, and how wretched must a people be where there is no hire for man nor beast, no peace in coming in and going out, and where the judgments of God set every man

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man against his neighbour in the greatness of the affliction.

When there is no hire for man or beast, it is a plain sign that business is at a stand; and every stagnation of this kind threatens the very vitals of a country. This calamity falls heaviest upon the lower and middling class of people, who make up the body and the most useful part of every nation. When the fields lie waste, the husbandman mourneth, the necessaries of life are with difficulty procured by the rich, and hunger and want seem unavoidable to the poor; sometimes when the multitude of inhabitants is greater than the land can bear, even the industrious cannot long find employ, and for want of that are reduced to distress; sometimes when by war and other devastations countries are so drained that labourers are not to be had, a man is more precious than fine gold, yea than the golden wedge of ophir; *Isaiah xiii. 12.* Though these cases be opposite yet the effect is the same; neither does it affect those only who are more immediate sufferers; the rich cannot live without the poor, and he that hires cannot do without some one to hire. Trade may indeed supply the wants of a nation, but trade is only an artificial supply; a country that has room for the spreading of its inhabitants, and has ground for tillage proportionable to their increase, must have greatly the advantage over a mere trading nation; the former can find those resources within itself for which the latter must be indebted to trade with its colonies and other nations. The gains of trade may

may possibly be larger than those by cultivation, but a country well cultivated will always nourish and maintain its inhabitants, a country blessed with natural advantages will easily procure the conveniences and even superfluities of life, either within itself, or at least by the exports of its natural produce; *The profit of the earth is for all, even the king himself is served by the field*, Eccles. v. 9. but when there is no hire neither for man nor beast, it is a sure sign that cultivation and trade is languishing, and it is with bodies politick as it is with the natural body, when once they begin to languish, if a remedy is not speedily found out and adhibited, it must affect every part of the whole, and the whole gradually fall into decay and consumption.

This was the case of the small remnant left in *Canaan*; they were only some of the meanest of the people, husbandmen and dressers of vineyards, and it seems propable that even these were rather slaves than subjects to the king of *Babylon*; hence they complain that they are servants in their own land, *Neb. ix. 36. Our inheritance is turned to strangers, our houses to aliens. Our necks are under persecution: we labour, and have no rest*; Lam. v. 2, 5.

During all these disasters, it was doubtless an additional and severe affliction, *that there was no peace to him that came in nor went out*; those that were already captives in *Babylon* could not with any safety return into their own land, and they that were left in it, and fain wanted to retire into *Egypt*, or any other place of security, could not go out; and even among themselves there was no peace; no

unanimity, but continual jarrings and discords. Some very remarkable instances of the kind are mentioned in the forty-first chapter of *Jeremiah*; nay even after their return all things were so unsettled, that, notwithstanding the hopeful appearance of their being once more restored to their own land, there was no peace to him that came in nor to him that went out; this was little better than war, and

War in its best light is a destruction of the human species, but war among brethren, intestine feuds and civil wars as they are called, of the worst evil are the worst species; when the right hand is lifted up against the left, when the members of the same body seek each other's destruction, the whole body must needs feel, and if they continue, be destroyed by it.

And here I cannot but remember the address made by some general to an *Abyssinian* monarch, who could imagine it worth his while to go to war with his own subjects, in order to make them submit to some religious rites and ceremonies, which he thought himself in conscience bound to impose upon them, and which they thought themselves in conscience bound to suffer any hardship rather than submit unto; a battle was fought, the prince was victorious, the field covered with the slain, when the general thus addressed the conquering monarch, pointing at the heaps of the slaughtered; “ These
 “ were your own subjects, and in every other cause
 “ willing to shed their blood and lay down their
 “ lives for you---they were our brethren, our own
 “ flesh and blood, and every victory of the kind
 “ you

“ you gain over them is a step towards the entire
 “ ruin of your own nation.” Methinks the warrior
 that spoke so, spoke like a sensible man and good
 patriot. The king gained the battle and gave up
 the point, wisely considering, that the gaining the
 affection of loyal subjects would be a greater security
 to his reign and kingdom than any submission he
 could force them unto by any act of mere power.

Union of minds and interests is the surest strength
 of any nation, a kingdom divided against itself can-
 not stand; *Israel* fell indeed by the sword of the
Chaldeans, but their own internal divisions gave the
 finishing stroke; the distress which they had brought
 upon themselves was great exceedingly, the hand
 of the LORD was stretched out against them, and
 the people returned not to him who did smite them;
 their affliction, instead of humbling them before
 God, only served to heighten their animosities a-
 gainst one another; hence their affliction is expres-
 sly mentioned as the cause of their disturbances,
 they hated, mistrusted, supplanted one another,
 and therefore there was no peace to him that came
 in, nor yet to him that went out.

There was no peace to him that came in, nor to
 him that went out, *because of the affliction*. When
 people think they have nothing more to hope they
 are apt to conclude they have also nothing to fear.
 When tyranny and oppression once arrive at a cer-
 tain height, they become intolerable even to loy-
 alty, and must recoil upon their authors. It is
 dangerous for sovereigns to make the experiment,
 how much their subjects may be able and willing to
 bear.

hear. Oppression makes even a wise man mad, and when any kingdom is all in confusion within itself, when violence beareth rule, and the good of the community ceases to be the supreme law, when unreasonable burdens are laid upon some to procure ease unto others, when jarring interests and different factions divide the state and impose upon the sovereign, such a nation not only ceases to be formidable to its neighbours and enemies, but it is also in very great danger of falling into the condition within itself which is here described, no peace to him that goes out nor to him that comes in.

Neither do all these things spring up out of the dust, or come upon a people by chance, or in the common course of things: *Shall there be evil in the city, and the LORD hath not done it?* Amos iii. 6. God indeed is not the author of confusion but of peace, 1 Cor. xiv. 33. he does not love iniquity but he also hateth oppression. Sometimes the sins of the subject are punished by arbitrary sovereigns, and oppression and arbitrary power are sometimes visited (and overset too) by the violence of unruly subjects.

There is a very remarkable instance of this in the reign of the son of *Salomon*. He came to the throne by hereditary right, unhappily for him he and his council probably thought that right indefeasible, his father had made his yoke heavy upon the land, at his accession to the throne, the subjects modestly represent their grievance, the sons of violence reject the moderate request of the sons of just and decent freedom, a **tax**, till then unheard of it would seem is imposed,

an officer is sent to gather the odious tribute, but the officer, by the verdict of all *Israel*, is stoned with stones, the king himself retires with precipitation, a war is resolved on, one hundred four-score thousand men take up arms against *Israel*, and appear ready to fall on; but the word of God came unto *Shemaiah*, the man of God, saying, *Speak unto Rehoboam, the son of Solomon king of Judah, and unto all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the remnant of the people, saying, Thus saith the LORD, ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel; return every man to his house, for this thing is of me, saith the LORD.* And we are further told, *they hearkened therefore to the word of the LORD, and returned and departed according to the word of the LORD; thus the shedding of blood was at that time prevented, and a stop put to a cruel and intestine war by an immediate interposition of divine providence, and that at the expence of Rehoboam, who was never able to bring back the ten tribes, but they continued a separate kingdom till they fell into the hands of their common enemy.*

I do not mention all this to justify or approve in every respect the conduct of the ten tribes, but to observe that if *Rehoboam* had taken the salutary advice of his old prudent counsellors, the defection and ensuing division would not have happened. [1 Kings xii. throughout.]

God cannot delight in, bless, or approve any thing that is wicked: *Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished, Prov. xi. 21.* Oppression

pression and rebellion are both wicked, and may become by a righteous judgment of God a scourge to one another. God abhors sin and evil, but even sin and evil is not committed without his knowledge and sufferance; he forms the light and creates darkness, he makes peace and creates evil, he the LORD does all these things; *Isaiab xlv. 7*. His wisdom and justice in some cases may permit the peace and tranquility of a sinful nation to be interrupted or taken away, by suffering the rulers to be intoxicated with too high notions of power, or by suffering the subjects to go beyond the just bounds, in asserting and maintaining their just rights, and confusion and disorders are the natural effects of all this, and it is as natural a consequence that in those days there is no hire for man nor beast, no peace to him that goes out nor comes in, and that every man is against his neighbour on account of the affliction.

c Thus far the gloomy part; let us next take notice of the pleasing prospect that opens by the change of the scene and the divine promise.

What God himself marks out as a very signal divine blessing, men certainly should receive as a precious mark of his favour. To remove so great an affliction, and to change their mournful condition into peace, plenty, and liberty, must be unto them an irresistible proof that God was again returned unto them in mercy; and this indeed he assures them of in express words: *I will not be unto the residue of my people as in former days, saith the LORD of hosts; for the seed shall be prosperous, the vine shall*
give

give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew, and I will make the remnant of my people to possess all these things.

Here is a general promise that God would not deal with them as he had of late. God changeth not neither in his nature or purposes; there is no shadow with him of variableness or turning; but there is a connection between man's carriage towards God and the way of God towards man: *The Lord is with you, if ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you; 2 Chron. xv. 2.* With the pure he shews himself pure; and in this sense it is said, that with the froward he will shew himself froward; *Psalms xviii. 26.* National sins bring on national calamities, and national reformation a national blessing; the same God that threatens to pluck up, pull down, and destroy a rebellious kingdom, will also turn from the evil he has threatened when they return from the evil which they have committed; and that this was the case at this time in *Israel* appears plain from the prayers of *Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah*, and many others; while they continued rebellious, the hand of the LORD should continue to be heavy upon them, but now they returned unto God, he would return unto them in mercy.

The labourer and husbandman should now be employed, the fields should be cultivated, and in the land that lay desolate, and almost uninhabited, in the land that was without man or beast, fields should be bought again for money, and there

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should be hire for man and beast; *Jerusalem should be inhabited as towns without walls, for the multitude of men and cattle therein, Zech. ii. 4.*

Their coming in and their going out should be in peace, he should strengthen the bars of their gates, and give peace unto their borders.

They should no longer be a disunited nation, but unite like the heart of one man; *I will (saith God) give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them and of their children after them, Jer. xxxii. 39.*

Neither does God only promise a removal of those evils under which in former days they groaned, but there is life also in his favour; God in his very nature is kind unto all, and his tender mercies are over all the works of his hands. Nothing but mercy would always attend man, had not man turned away from the love of his maker. Sin only makes a separation between us and our God, and when the cause of his displeasure is removed; the streams of his kindness follow their natural course, and flow down upon man. The order and œconomy of the whole creation speaks aloud the kind designs of God to man; fury is not in him; punishing is his strange and the doing kindness is his natural work: Accordingly on their being turned unto him, and he unto them, he promises them the very reverse of the evils under which they had hitherto laboured; plenty instead of famine, the dew of heaven and rain in due season instead of drought, and every kind of temporal prosperity and abundance in the land to which they were now restored;

restored; the heavens should not be of brass, nor the earth of iron; God would no longer forbid the clouds to rain upon them, but he would hear the heavens, and they should hear the earth, and the earth should hear corn, wine, and oil, and these should hear *Jezreel*, *Hosea ii.* 21, 22. Neither should these blessings be only transitory but durable, the days of their mourning should be at an end, and the remnant of the nation now returned unto the LORD and to his sanctuary should rejoice in the possession of all these blessings; they should no longer hang up their harps by the willows, but again sing the songs of *Sion* in their own land, and give thanks unto the LORD, who had brought them again from the heathen, and turned their captivity like the streams in the south: O LORD, *I will praise thee; though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion; for great is the holy one of Israel in the midst of thee; Isaiah xii.* 1, 6.

And this naturally leads me, which was the last thing proposed, to endeavour an improvement of what has been said suitable to the design of our present meeting.

Some among us possibly may be ready to ask, what meaneth this service, it is neither *Sabbath* nor new moon. To them I would answer: We are met to-day to offer our thanks unto the great ruler of all things, that he has averted from us a very great evil, which in part indeed was come upon us already, and which, considered as a punishment of our sins, we but too justly deserve.

We are met to offer thanks unto God, that our invaluable privileges are preserved, that our land is not become a land of slaves, nor our fields a scene of blood. We are met to give thanks unto God, that our gloomy apprehensions are removed, that the *British* parliament has seen the justice of our complaints, that our superiors, by this act of justice and moderation, have shewn themselves superior to themselves. We rejoice that affection and confidence is restored between us and our mother country. We are met to give thanks unto the Most High, that, by the repeal of this act, there is hire again for man and beast, that our ports are open, our trade unmolested, that we may go to and fro in safety, that men are no more set every man against his neighbour, that *Manasseh* is not against *Ephraim*, nor *Ephraim* against *Manasseh*; and we are also met to pray, that our posterity may enjoy all these things, that mercy and truth may be the blessing of our days, and of our whole nation, and that our civil and religious liberties may be preserved inviolable till time shall be no more.

I suppose there are few or none hearing me that think we have not now any particular cause to be thankful; if any should think so, I should despair of convincing them that we really have; it is generally observed, that we best know to value our mercies from the want of them, but I sincerely wish there may never be any conviction of this kind in all the *British* dominions.

Come then, my friends, let us make mention of the mercies of the LORD according to all his goodness,

ness, and according to the multitude of his loving-kindness which he has shewn unto the *British* nation. Your own minds will too easily suggest unto you what must have been our case if this unhappy act had not been repealed; and should not our gratitude bear some proportion to the greatness of our escape? Should we not thankfully review every circumstance that brought about this pleasing event, and offer our humble and sincere thanks to the kind providence of God, that gave success to the noble and unwearied endeavours of our friends for that purpose? I think the almost unanimous, steady, and prudent union of the *Americans*, does honour to their present generation, and as it was very providential, and to many I suppose very unexpected, so I look upon it as a real matter of gratitude. I would not be understood to vindicate every thing that a confused multitude or a few individuals may have done in a time of publick confusion, but the manly, nervous, and constitutional representations made by the representatives of the people, may be looked upon as one of the means which providence has made use of to set the justice of the *American* complaints in its true light, and to excite us able and worthy friends to stand up as noble champions for our cause. Had a whole people, who looked upon themselves as oppressed and dealt with contrary to their natural privileges, been disregarded, there is no saying what might have been the consequence; and the consequence must have been felt on each side of the water; we must sink or swim together. That all our fears
have

have subsided, that all this jealousy has been removed, that the dark night which seemed to hang over our heads is turned into the light of a hopeful morning, surely calls for our loudest and sincerest thanksgiving : Offer therefore unto God thanks, give unto the LORD glory and strength, let those that cried unto the LORD in trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses, give thanks unto his name. *He brought them out of darkness, and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder. Ob, that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!* Psalm cvii. 14, 15.

And, in the next place, let our thanks be given to our great and good King, the friend of mankind, and the father of his people. He glories to reign in the hearts of his subjects; and no king can have a better title to the hearts of those over whom he rules. If it is *a pleasure to him* to repeal an act that gives pain unto his subjects, may all his servants copy after him, and act worthy of the principles of so great a king, and so good a master; and may every possible demonstration of loyalty and affection be ever paid him by all, but especially by his *American* subjects. The *Americans*, who, I believe I may justly say to a man, have been friends to the succession in his illustrious house, if possible, must now shew a still greater degree of attachment in return for this royal condescension and favour.

Bless, O God, the king; long let the crown flourish on his head. Give him the desires
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of his soul; may he ever be a king after thine own heart; give him wise counsellors and faithful subjects; let his reign be long, peaceable, and glorious; may the wicked never stand before his throne, and so his throne be ever established in righteousness; and may our posterity in some distant generation pay him the mournful tear, when he is taken up into a kingdom that cannot be shaken.

Let me further beseech you, my hearers, to remember the rock from which you were hewn; by descent or incorporation we are now all *Britons*; let *Britain's* interests be ever dear to us all. Pray for the prosperity of the nation, for in her prosperity you shall prosper. We have seen our mother-country act the part of a tender parent; let us never fail to act the part of truly dutiful children. May *Britons* have a love for one another which many waters cannot quench. May eastern and western *Britons* ever be more firmly united than *Joseph* and *Ephraim*, which were made like one stick in the hands of the prophet. If God abhors him who soweth discord among brethren, let us abhor them who would do any thing that might tend towards a separation of interests or an alienation of affections. Let *Britain* and *British America* ever be like one heart and one soul; he that would divide them, *anathema sit*, let him be held accursed by both.

It is a remark of the wisest king, *Evil men understand not judgment, but they that fear the LORD*
under.

understand [take notice of, observe, and improve] *all things*, Prov. xxviii. 5. Let us remember then, and let our posterity know it, that if a prudent, proper remonstrance had not been made and received, the year 1765 must have been the fatal year from which the loss of *American* liberty must have been dated. Let us also remember, that the year following was remarkable for the repeal of an act that gave so universal uneasiness, and had like to be so destructive to *Britain* on each side of the great waters. *

If we record these remarkable interesting events, it may not be improper to subjoin: Fear God, honour the king, stand fast in your liberty, and be not entangled with the yoke of bondage.

Let us forgive our enemies and honour our friends, the more so because some of them (which is a pleasing honourable circumstance) have at all times signally distinguished themselves in the cause of liberty, and deserved greatly of the *British* nation. Let every injury received be written in sand, and all kindness be preserved in marble, and every friend of liberty and his country be held in everlasting remembrance.

The design of the repeal was to remove inconveniencies and consequences detrimental to the
British

* The Stamp-Act was to have taken place Nov. 1, 1765, and it took place in all provinces conquered from the French and Spaniards in the last war, also in most of the islands, the military government of Nova-Scotia; and in Georgia stamps were for shipping only. The said act was repealed in the house of commons by a majority of 108, and a majority of 34 in the house of lords; and the repealing act received the royal assent March 18, 1766.

British kingdoms ; let us then do nothing which might continue those inconveniencies which that wise and salutary act means to prevent.

Especially let us never give any handle to any to call in question our loyalty to the king, and our sincere and firm attachment to our mother-country ; let us ever be zealous for its prosperity, and promote it to the utmost of our power ; let each one of us say upon this occasion : *Pray for the peace of Britain ; they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions sakes I will now say, Peace unto thee. Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek thy good ;* Psalm cxxii. 6, 7, 8, 9. Let us pay a chearful obedience to the laws of the realm, and on all occasions approve ourselves worthy subjects of the best of kings. Let us always return a filial respect to the indulgence and tenderness of an affectionate parent. Let us convince even those who have taken upon them to vilify and misrepresent the *Americans* how greatly they have been mistaken, and how very unjust have been their inflammatory reflections. Let the mean tools of faction be put to shame, (if they are capable of that) by a conduct the very reverse of that which they would have laid to our charge. Let us by well-doing put to silence the ignorance or malice of foolish or wicked men. Let every distinction of names and parties, every national prejudice, be buried in everlasting oblivion. Let the good man whoever he be be the object of universal love and esteem, and the bad man the only object of aver-

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tion and abhorrence. Let there be no other emulation but who shall best promote the good of the whole. Render to every one his due, tribute to whom tribute, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour. *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the LORD's sake, whether it be to the king as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God; 1 Peter ii. 13, 14, 16.* There is a very essential difference between liberty and licentiousness, and it is highly criminal under pretence of the one to indulge the other. If any excess of this kind has been committed, may it be sincerely repented of and carefully avoided for the future, *so speak and so act as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty, James ii. 13.*

ABOVE ALL, let us ever remember, that *righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people, Prov. xiv. 34.* Our temporal happiness cannot be more surely promoted, nor our civil and religious liberties be better secured, than by a life suitable to the dignity of our christian profession. Christianity is a benevolent institution, that bears a friendly aspect to civil government, and does not in the least diminish the natural or civil rights of the subject. It teaches superiors to rule in the fear of God, and to look upon their subjects as their fellow creatures and brethren, whose happiness to promote is the very design of their office; it engages subjects to obey for the LORD's sake, not only
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to the gentle but also to the froward. We cannot be good christians unless we are also good subjects and good members of the community; let every one then depart from iniquity that is named after *Christ*. By promoting our eternal we also shall secure our temporal welfare; nothing that has a tendency to make us unhappy hereafter can have any tendency to make us happy here. If ever (which God forbid) we should be cursed with a tyrannical oppressive government, our sins must be the cause of it. O! let us not sin away our mercies, neither let us sin any more lest something worse befall us. We can never be said to be free while we are the servants of sin, neither can any bondage equal that of being led captive by *Satan* according to his will; and yet this is the case of every graceless sinner, *While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage*, 2 Peter ii. 19. How insignificant will our struggle for liberty appear, while we deliberately give up ourselves to be slaves unto lust; if we abhor bondage, O! let us at least take care that our bondage may not be eternal; chains of eternal darkness are the portion of every impenitent sinner; and *Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?* Rom. vi. 16. When will the poor captive begin to feel his fetters and groan for liberty? Where the spirit of the LORD is there is liberty, and where the spirit of the world and sin reigns there is slavery and bondage. Every

deliberate sin helps to rivet the chain, and the longer vicious habits are indulged the more difficult it is to shake off their dominion. Man was made free, but he also was made good; the sinner has lost his original goodness, and liberty departed from him, when he hearkened to the voice of the tempter; one cannot be recovered without the other; if we will be truly free we must become truly good; we must be renewed in the spirit of our mind, and be created after God in righteousness and true holiness, *Eph. iv. 24.* This, my hearers, is the true idea of liberty, to be freed from every hurtful constraint, and to be able to do all that tends to make us truly happy, or else to be free indeed is neither more nor less than to be heartily engaged for him whose service is perfect freedom.

O! my hearers, with what pleasure did we lately receive the news which makes the subject of our thanksgiving to-day, how did joy sparkle in every countenance, how warmly did we shake hands and congratulate one another upon the occasion; we seemed like people that had been apprehensive of being shipwrecked and happily made a harbour; we seemed almost like animals in the air pump to whom breath and life is restored by the return of that element; never before have I seen any news received with equal and so universal satisfaction; and all that was right; there were reasons more than sufficient for great fear, and when they subsided it was meet they should be succeeded by joy as great: But with what woeful coldness and indifference have too many carried themselves towards
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the best news that was ever sent from heaven upon earth; how little have we been affected with the glad tidings of great joy, that unto us is a saviour born. *Jesus Christ* himself came to preach deliverance to the captives, to set at liberty them that were bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the LORD; he was in bonds that he might break our chains, he laid down his life as a ransom for those that were in bondage of *Satan* and sin, he died that we might eternally live. Our king is also our saviour, his subjects are the purchase of his blood, and he invites strangers to come and kiss his sceptre, with no other view but that he may have the pleasure of making them eternally happy. Behold how much has he loved us, and how shall we now escape if we neglect his great salvation? How ungrateful are we to him, and how unjust to ourselves, if we chuse to continue in that slavery which he has been at such amazing pains to redeem us from.

Come then, my friends, let us embrace this opportunity and become his real subjects; let us cheerfully forsake the service of vanity and sin, and unreservedly give ourselves up to the LORD that bought us. How happy would it be, if from this pleasing event we might also date our sincere and hearty endeavours at least, to become his freemen, that, being delivered from the fear of our enemies, we might serve him *in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life*, Luke i. 75. then, and not till then, shall we be a people really free and truly happy; then will the son make us free, and we shall
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be free indeed; then shall we have a most indisputable right to the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

When shall the kingdom of *Christ* extend over all the earth, and homage be paid him by those who sit now in darkness and in the shadow of death? When shall his gentle reign be the bliss of every nation, ignorance, slavery, and superstition, be altogether banished from the earth, and the blessings of peace, liberty, and the gospel, be scattered over the whole wide creation?

For these things, my brethren, let us pray, thy kingdom come, and seeing we look for a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us by faith and holiness be daily preparing for the same; there the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.

Now to the King invisible, immortal, and eternal, to him who is able to keep us, and to present us before God with exceeding great joy, to the only wise God our saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. AMEN.