Gentlemen, there is no longer any ground for hope. If we wish to be free, if we wish to preserve inviolate those inestimable privileges which belong to us as free men, if we mean not basely to abandon the noble struggle in which we have been so long engaged, in which we have pledged ourselves never to abandon until the glorious object of our struggle be obtained, then we must fight. I repeat it sir, we must fight. To arms, until the God of Hosts is all we have left us.

They tell us, sir, that we are weak, unable to cope with so powerful an adversary. But when shall we be stronger? Will it be the next week, or the next year? Will it be when we are totally disarmed, and a British guard shall be stationed in every house? Shall we acquire the means of effectual resistance by lying supinely on our backs, hugging the delusive phantom of hope until our enemy hath bound us hand and foot? Sir, we are not weak. If we make a proper use of those means the God of nature hath placed in our power, three millions of people armed in the holy cause of liberty, and in such a country, that which we possess, are invincible by any force our enemy can send against us.

Besides, sir, we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God, who presides over the destinies of nations, who will raise up friends to fight our battle for us. The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone. It is to the vigilant, the active, the brave. Besides, sirs, we have no election. Should we be base enough to desire it, it is now already too late to retire from the contest. There is no retreat but in submission and slavery. Our chains are forged: their clanking may be heard upon the plains of Boston. The war is inevitable, and let it come. I repeat it sir, let it come.

It is in vain to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen may cry 'peace, peace!' but there is no peace. The war is actually begun. The next gale that blows from the north shall bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms. Our brethren are already in the field. Why stand we here idle? What is it that they wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, almighty God!

I know not what course others may take. But as for me, give me liberty, or give me death!