

# S E R M O N,

DELIVERED JULY 4<sup>th</sup>, 1808,

AT WALPOLE, N. H.

IN

COMMEMORATION OF THE ANNIVERSARY

OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

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PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN SAID TOWN.

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*This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people, that shall be created, shall praise the LORD. Pl. cii. 18.*

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WALPOLE, N. H.

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JULY, 1808.



Thirdly, improve it according as the present interesting season, and state of our affairs require.

First, an explanation of the whole passage from v. 5, to beyond our text, is to be given.

The prophet thus begins, "Hear ye the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word." The address comes from the Lord himself, and therefore demands solemn attention and attentive hearing. They who tremble at God's word are evidently such as make conscience of observing the institutions, and walking in the ordinances and commands of the Lord, in preference to the traditions, and impositions of men. "Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified." These tremblers at God's word, were hated of their brethren, and cast out for his name's sake, and all for the glory of the Lord. The conscientious obeyers of God rather than men, are often hated by them who do not follow their laudable example, and even when united by fraternal ties. The world hated Christ because of his non-conformity to it. And He tells his disciples that they should be hated of all men for his name's sake. And both, like these in the context, were the objects of the hatred of their own nation, their brethren, who professed to be worshippers of the same God with them. The haters of their brethren indeed mixed their own inventions with divine ordinances, and taught for doctrines the commandments of men, and could not abide those who received the Scriptures pure, and unadulterated with human mixtures. Nothing so provokes bigoted traditionists as a strict and close adherence to scripture, and a resolute opposition to their new found inventions: it greatly grieves their zealous souls and stirs up their wrath to persecuting fury. So was it here—"And they said, let the Lord be glorified," *after they had cast them out.*

The original word for *casting them out*, is very emphatical and amounts to a total expulsion of them from communion. Supererogationists pride themselves much in doing what is required of them by pretended lawful, but really usurped authority. They think they acquire a double honour in obeying God and man too, not considering that it belongs to God alone to prescribe in matters of religion; and if it is only for decency and order's sake, every

one ought to be left to the freedom of his own conscience, and not be compelled to act counter to the dictates of his own mind. These tremblers at God's word were not only cast out of communion and fellowship, but were obliged to seek an asylum in a foreign land. For the earth did not bring forth, nor was the nation born where they dwelt with their brethren, but where they went to after being cast out. They being thus expelled are pursued with this blessing, "Let the Lord be glorified." It is no novelty for blind zeal and superstition to prompt their votaries to persecute the conscientious, under the specious pretence of pleasing and glorifying God. "They, saith Christ to his disciples, shall put you out of the Synagogues, yea, the time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think he doth God service." Saul thought, in the plenitude of his zeal, he ought to do many things against Jesus of Nazareth, and his followers. Thus thought the persecutors of their conscientious brethren, and it seems they pursued them even to the land they were cast out to. The travail and pain these poor outcasts are subjected to, is of their brethren's procuring. "But, before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. v.7." This was in the land they were cast to. And it is surprising this man child should be born before travail or pain came on. What can this mean? deliverance is not accomplished till after travail and pain. The metaphor of travailing in Scripture, is used to signify some great distress; it is taken from the labour of women: but men may suffer it. "Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas; for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it." Jerem. xxx. 6. 7. This travail is the occasion of the nation's being born at once. A nation is born when it becomes independent: and its travail is in the pain that precedes that birth. This travail is, doubtless, the calamity of war. As travail and parturition pains are literally the distress of the female sex, by the penal establishment of God, for the transgression of Eve; so war, proceeding from the lusts of men, is, in its travail and pain, the distress of nations. To this calamity the forecited

Jeremiah

Jeremiah refers, and so do other passages in the prophets. And among all kinds of war, none is more fierce than that between brethren; this, though called civil war, is often carried on most uncivilly. That the travail and pain of war is intended in the context, appears probable from "the voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the Lord, that rendereth recompence to his enemies;" which is no doubt the cry and alarm of war, rousing the people to arms, to defend themselves against their enemies.

It also seems that the Lord espouses the cause of these outcasts. His voice is heard that rendereth recompence to his enemies: persecutors of their brethren for religion's sake are God's enemies: though they say, "Let the Lord be glorified," they have no commission from him, to do this bad work. "He (God) shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed." God protects these outcasts: he can help without means, yet he commonly uses them, in the deliverance of his people. Here they were animated to stand up in their own defence, by a voice of noise from the city, and then by a voice from the temple. The city being distressed cry out to the surrounding country for assistance: and the voice of the ministers of religion encourage them: and the Lord adds success to their exertions, by rendering recompence to their ~~earth~~. As the earth in Revelation is said to help the persecuted woman; so, by the above means, the earth is made to bring forth in one day, and a nation is born at once to the surprise of all who hear of it or see it. They cry out in astonishment, "Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children, numerous espousers and defenders of her own sons. And God himself crowns all with desired success: "Shall I bring to the birth and not cause to bring forth, saith the Lord: Shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God." Before we come to the accommodation of these things to the cause and occasion of this day's anniversary; some farther notice must be taken of this extraordinary *man child*, brought forth in a very extraordinary manner, before travail or pain came. By a man child in prophetic language, we may understand  
a politic

a politic Head, consisting of one or more persons. The man child that the woman in the revelation, flying into the wilderness, brings forth, is generally conceived to be Constantine the Great, who put an end to the persecution of the Church, by the dragon Galerius, the heathen Roman emperor. The use of this will be seen under The Second thing proposed to be considered, even the pertinency of the accommodation of these things to the cause and occasion of this day's anniversary.

The *cause* of our fathers' coming here was exactly similar to that we have treated of above. " Their brethren hated them, and cast them out for the Lord's name's sake, because they trembled at his word," that is, closely adhered to the sacred scriptures, and observed the ordinances of divine worship, according to the dictates of their own consciences, unmixed with human inventions. They were a very conscientious set of men, who made the Scriptures their only rule of faith, worship, and manners. They desired a farther reformation than was effected in England under Henry the viii. Edward the vi. and Elizabeth, and could not conform to some of the rites and ceremonies retained, as was pretended for decency and order's sake. For this they had the name of Puritans. The rigorous impositions of the Church of England by law established, which they justly thought kept some of the superstitions and corruptions of the Church of Rome, cut them off from Christian Communion, and subjected them to civil exclusions and inconveniences, as all dissenters are to this day by the test act, tho' with a freedom from direct persecution by the act of toleration so called. If these tremblers at God's word had been unmolestedly allowed to enjoy that liberty wherewith Christ hath made his people free, they never would have left the pleasant land of their nativity, for this uncultivated wilderness, and haunt of savage men; yet less savage than their brethren who cast them out, to brave the dangers of the sea, and endure unknown hardships on these shores, three thousand miles from their former home. Things which their brethren owned to be indifferent, which these tremblers did not view so, were imposed upon them as terms of communion: and they were reduced to the sad necessity of disobeying God, and violating their consciences, or else quitting the place of their fathers' sepulchres,  
and

and their earthly home, and becoming pilgrims in this strange land.

When thus, hated and cast out for the Lord's name's sake, their brethren, like other persecutors of better men, than themselves, laid, "Let the Lord be glorified."

They pretended all this vigour was for God's glory. What ideas must such men have of the glory of God? There is scarcely any Scripture phrase or term more abused than this of glorifying God. The assembly of divines say that to glorify God and enjoy him forever is the chief end of man: an end yet never to be accomplished according to them, because of another end to be answered directly the reverse of their enjoyment of him forever.

After these tremblers at God's word, being cast out, came hither, their God did not forsake them, but took them under his holy protection; defended them from enemies, and delivered them from dangers, and at length prospered them into a great people. They were often distressed in their Indian wars, and in that which was called Philip's were in great danger of utter extermination. But as they were cast out at first, and purchased the land here of the natives, and settled the country at their own expence, so in that scene of danger they received no help from their brethren that hated them. They under God struggled alone against all difficulties, and by the assistance of providence were supported and carried through: Then their brethren that hated them, became jealous of them, kept a watchful eye over them, used means to cramp their growth, and pursued them with unconstitutional acts, requiring unlimited submission to them, though if submitted to, reduced them to abject vassalage.

Unconditional submission was required to those whose fathers first cast ours out. It is hard for the injurious to forgive the injured. They wanted rent of the farms we had procured, and subdued at our own expence: The pretence was that we should pay them for defending us in the French war, when they were the cause of that war, reaped all the benefits, and at the close of it acknowledged, we had done more than our proportion, and reimbursed the same to several provinces and colonies: another pretence was, to support a standing army for our defence, that

that is to keep ourselves under, for then we had no enemies to fear. When help was needed by us, no standing army was provided, nor could their assistance be obtained for paying for it.

All the while a revenue was thus demanded of us, by regulating trade acts, by us submitted to, they were greatly enriched at our expence.

In such a state of things, what was to be done? We must unconditionally submit, or resist the most formidable power in Europe, or even on earth, who could any ways distress us, whose fleets covered and commanded the ocean, when we had not one ship of war to oppose them: for they had taken special care to prevent our growth in shipping, and whose troops were veteran, flushed with late victories over France; and who had for years before made it their policy, to neglect and discourage our militia, and deprive us of all military stores, and every means of defence, whilst their own resources were great. Many good people among us, no enemies to the country, thought it madness for us to resist: Britain laughed at the attempt: greedy pensioners, and cormorants, expected by our subduction, to fatten on our spoils. And the crown expected by our subjugation such an accession of power and influence, already too great for the other branches, as would render it despotic. Had they prevailed we must have been slaves; and the little nominal freedom Britons enjoy, would have been totally lost. Our persecuting brethren have cause to rejoice that we bravely chose freedom or death.

But before the travail and pains of war came on, a man child was born, and a political head was established in the American Congress. Soon after the memorable Boston port bill was pass'd, and had become known, the American Congress was formed in 1774, the year before the travail and pain of war came on. When this remarkable child was born, the earth had not brought forth, nor did our nation exist. Independence was not thought of; a proposal of it would have been universally rejected. A separation from what had been with fondness and pride called the parent state was not meditated. Petitions humble enough, but with a manly assertion of rights, were formed, but not received by their haughty step-Mother. Her pride would



not allow her to own her fallibility. She had been subjected to some mortification by the repeal of the stamp act; and determined not to recede from her claims. Still the provinces wished not to come to extremities. She brought on the travail of war at Lexington. It was a happy circumstance that the man child was then born, which laid the foundation for our nation's birth. This child though but young acted like a man, and its previous existence prevented our being thrown into confusion and disorder by the travail of war. For this blessing our Fathers' God, and our's deserves grateful acknowledgments. But for this our union could hardly have been effected; and without a union we must soon, one province after another, have been reduced to unlimited subjection. Britain had pursued the old maxim of tyrants, *divide and rule*. By the settlement of provincial lines unjustly against the provinces she was most jealous of, she caused divisions among neighbouring colonies which she wished not to remove. But by this man child's conduct, the motto was realized, *united we conquer, divided we die*. The persons of the first Congress, 51 in number, were men of great wisdom and firmness: they understood times and seasons, and knew what ought to be done; they were native patriots, and no imported exotics; confidence could be placed in them: and their brethren were generally at their commandment.

Had there been as many foreigners, and emigrants in the first Congress, from the Lord knows where, as have been since, to our sorrow, and it is feared to our ruin, in some of our congresses, the management of our affairs, we have just reason to think, would not have been so wise and prosperous. It is spoken of in Scripture as a blessing to have thier nobles of themselves, and their governor proceed from the midst of them: but to have strangers and imports from abroad, as is the case in France, is mortifying enough, and not very safe. As this man child was of American growth, the influence of him over the several provinces was remarkable. When the people at large were generally unhinged from all governmental power and authority, they paid uncommon deference to this man child, they saw him with pleasure endued with the wisdom of ages and the resolution of a man. May God that giveth wisdom have the praise.

Our hearty prayer is that the present, and all future congresses may be like minded to the first, and as true to the best interest of our country : let us not fall under the curse of being governed by strangers, but may we be ruled by natives brought forth by our earth, who will naturally care for our welfare. Imported governmental wisdom and power, even *duty free*, will never be, as it never hath been to the interest of United America, and it is much to the discredit of our earth which hath brought forth so many worthy rulers and defenders, that we should have recourse to the last efforts of the worn out soil of Europe, to exotics transported, of no great intrinsic worth, and who owe all their celebrity to our foolish infatuated fondness.

When hostility began at Lexington, by the attack of the British dogs of war upon our peaceful citizens, our dependence virtually ceased. Arms against subjects are unlawful means of government. The haughty insulting order of a British officer to men about their own business, "disperse you rebels," hath no authority : one fellow subject hath no command over another but by commission from higher powers, and the higher powers have none contrary to the constitution, and the law of right. Resistance becomes a duty when power and authority are abused. The resister may be termed a rebel, but if he is successful, that unjust reproach will be taken off, and the opposer of unlawful authority, or of unlawful means of government, will be applauded. America was put upon an equality with Britain when the first gun was fired upon her peaceful sons : but as there were hopes of an accommodation, she did not declare herself independent until July 4, 1776. Then the nation was born at once, and then was heard, and seen a thing astonishing to all : the step was bold and daring, yet necessary ; timid friends stood aghast ; enemies clamoured against it, and used all means to render it abortive. The British lion roared aloud against it, and some from among ourselves apostatized from us, to our enemies. Then the Rubicon was past : freedom and victory were on one side, conquest and slavery on the other. But God did not cause to come to the birth and not bring, or after causing to bring forth shut the womb. The colonies and provinces had been before roused to arms by the commencement of hostilities on the part of Britain. The  
voice

voice of noise from the city, and the voice from the temple sounded the alarm. Then that rope of union was twisted, which by way of derision Lord North called a rope of sand, consisting of thirteen strands, not yet broken, but strengthened by the addition of others since.

When the sound of the trumpet, and the alarm of war were heard, and garments rolled in blood were seen in the land, this surprising, wonderful, unexpected, and hitherto unheard of, and unseen event took place, the earth, the whole continent brought forth in one day.

Swift as the lightening flashes from pole to pole, so soon did the military spirit pervade, and actuate all orders of men, throughout the colonies. The husbandman forsook his farm, the merchant relinquished his trade and gains: the learned in law dismissed their clients, (the first congress consisted of two thirds of this profession,) the mechanic resigned his tools, the hoary head forgot his age, the daughters of Columbia were not wanting in their influential aid, all, all prepared for war: the capable seized their arms, and marched where the voice of the city called them, and the voice from the temple directed them to go.

The rope of sand being cemented with blood became strong; an army was soon organized under the great WASHINGTON, for our protection, and the defence of our invaded liberties. The contest was continued for more than a year in travail and pain, before the nation was born by the declaration of independence. Then the object was fixed, its strength increased, its growth became conspicuous, it was owned by other nations, and by the blessing of heaven on our arms, after many well fought battles, and proof was given that American cowards, as we were termed could fight; and the capture of two Generals with their armies, a thing unheard of in the British annals, that haughty nation was reduced to the necessity of the establishment of peace, and the acknowledgment of our independence also.

Thus you may see how pertinent the accommodation of this passage is to our Fathers and to us. If the primary design of the prophecy was not fulfilled in the dispensations of providence towards us in this land, in our fathers' days and ours; yet Scripture hath been worse wrested, than by such an application. The agreement of so many events

events to the prophecy can hardly be thought to be accidental. Nevertheless, should the design of it be yet future, the accommodation of it to ourselves can do no injury.

In the celebration of this day's anniversary greater force of eloquence and powers of language have been employed than I can pretend to. The subject hath been treated various ways, and well nigh exhausted. At least nothing new could be expected from me, or even old matters placed in so conspicuous a point of light as abler pens could do. I have used plainness of speech, and endeavored to stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance, of what God hath done for our fathers and for us. We who are of age have seen his interpositions in our favour, our sons may profit by the brief account that hath been given.

Let us recollect these things in gratitude to God the King of nations, and be religiously glad.

This day hath been often celebrated gladly, but not always religiously grateful. The hand of God that led us all the way hitherto hath not been remembered, or all the returns made to him, he might expect from these free independent, sovereign states, as we affect to call ourselves, not without some tincture of pride. The idea of independence is so pleasing to degenerate man, that not unfrequently it is extended to independence of God also.

The sovereign unalienable rights of this divine King have not been duly acknowledged or uninvaded in some of our constitutions of government, in legislative acts, executive appointments, or in the suffrages of freemen designating persons to office. The King of nations whose ordinance government is in every lawful form, hath no chapter or section declarative of his civil, religious, or moral rights: a very essential defect this, which heathens would be ashamed of. The acknowledgment of twenty and even of a hundred gods or more, is far better than of none.\* A man that hath no acknowledged God cannot be depended upon: and a state or nation without such a one is a headless monster. In consequence of the former defect, the

\* The Author of notes on Virginia, saith, "It does me no injury for my neighbour to say there are twenty Gods or no God. It neither picks my pocket or breaks my leg." Whether polytheism or atheism are the principles of his neighbour seems a matter of indifference to him. But I should be afraid of the latter's doing worse to me than picking my pocket, or breaking my leg.

fear of God hath not had an influential agency, or been sought after as the first qualification of a ruler, in electing or appointing to office. And so far as this hath been or is the case, it is an affectation and exercise of independency that God hath not granted, and men and nations have no right to. In his ordinance of government and in his grant of authority to rulers, and privileges to people, the Deity hath reserved certain rights to himself, and that of absolute independent sovereignty is one. For any state or states, ruler, or rulers, or ruled to say they will have no God or King over them, or to neglect to own their dependence on the most HIGH, or to invade, or not defend his rights by their laws, is a high misdemeanor.

Few act as if they thought there was one higher than they, to whom they are accountable for their conduct in their elective or official capacity. The source of all evils in elective governments is in the not using or abusing the privilege of election. If unfit men are chosen or appointed to be ministers of God; men very unlike to him, the righteous will have cause to mourn, as some think they have this day. The ideas that electors have that they may neglect or use their privilege as they will, without accountability, and that the elected are their servants and not God's ministers for his honour and the public good; and that the people are the source of sovereign power, lead to absolute independence on God the author of all governing power, in every mode of its lawful conveyance or exercise. And yet this idea of the sovereignty of the people too much prevails in towns and states: by reason hereof the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. The elected think they must please their Master, the sovereign people, and sacrifice to the drag that pulled them into office. Election conveys no authority, but only designates the persons to exercise the authority which the ordinance of God gives, or the constitution of the state in subordination thereunto conveys to the chosen into any office. All power or authority is of God in the marriage relation, in the civil and military departments, and in ecclesiastical government. The governed have a power of privilege in chusing who shall rule over them under God, but are the authors of no authority. Until this ungodly notion that sovereignty is from the ruled is rooted out, good government cannot be expected.

**expected.** It is the duty of all to worship their creator, if the people create their rulers, and not God by his ordinance : if their authority is derived from their electors, and not from the King of nations, the sovereign people are the objects of worship, and not God : independence of God is established by this wicked yet popular doctrine. If a majority of electors are evil, and act themselves, the evil will be chosen : and when the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do but mourn that the wicked bear rule ? You may think this improper upon the present occasion, but it is a mistake ; I am striking at the root of all our evils in government. All begins in town meetings, and springs from the neglect or abuse of the privilege of election. It is divine not human politics I am preaching upon, and will not forbear tho' the Ægis is pointed against me : the panoply of God is my security. Some disuse the right of suffrage : one sinner may prevent or destroy much good, and by his neglect occasion the establishment of iniquity by law, or occasion an atheist, deist, infidel, or illuminee's becoming president of the United States. Other some in town meetings act at random, or as some designing persons direct them. Hence we have sometimes most wretched conduct, which all individually are ashamed of, or at least cannot defend. Thus they set a fine example to chosen rulers to do as they have done, to choose and appoint other officers in the same unworthy manner, even up to the head of government. An elective government like ours can never be bad long, unless the electors are in fault, who exercise their privilege, not as reason, religion, and the public interest direct, but choose men of known irreligious and immoral characters. There is nothing to secure the fidelity of such men : the greatness of the ability of a man without a God, renders him a more dangerous enemy than the man who hath twenty. The good elector or ruler can say with Nehemiah, " Think upon me my God for good, according to all that I have done for this people." The elector may sometimes be deceived or mistaken in his object, the man of his choice, yet this is not like knowingly making a wrong choice : The suffrage is designed well : and the elected knowing he was chosen for what he is conscious he is not, may yet be careful to support the character he was supposed to be possessed of, or at least

least the less apt to warp from it. But if known irreligion and infidelity are no bar to preferment, and virtue and piety are of no importance in a public station, in the view of electors, the wicked may bear rule, and the righteous be left to mourn. If none but the electors of the bramble were scratched by him, it would be only eating the fruit of their own doings.

At the present day there is much dispute about governmental measures, and for our divisions there ought to be searching of heart. The government hath unjustly excluded the Clergy from the privileges of freemen, only because we are officers in a kingdom not of this world; if we should mete the same measure towards officers in the kingdom of this world, and exclude them from spiritual privileges, upon this account, we should hear a just complaint from the few who desire to partake of what is spiritual, and a louder cry of tyranny from many for being deprived of what they do not desire. Our position fits us to be spectators of what passes, and our duty as Ministers of the Prince of the Kings of the earth, obliges us to inspect all parties, and reprove what is amiss in any. This duty and right is indeed denied by some, they call it a meddling with politics. These same persons once called upon the clergy to sound the alarm from the temple at the beginning of the revolutionary war. But now we must hold our peace, the reason of this change is obvious, it is feared we shall penetrate the Ægis of demoralizers, and the pursuers of unconstitutional measures, and expose them to public view as what they really are. As watchmen if we descry evil we ought to give warning of it. We have a duty to God, to our country, and to posterity to discharge. And there is just cause that at this time, and upon this occasion, we lift up our voices like trumpets, cry aloud and spare not.

This therefore we say, that all, both rulers and ruled, all sides and parties owe allegiance, subjection and obedience to God as King of nations, and all also are or ought to be his professed willing subjects as King of Saints: to own and explicitly acknowledge their dependence on him under both these titles and characters. This is the best way to maintain our independence on all others. Rulers as God's ministers, not people's servants only for God's sake and the

the public good, from whom as their King, ~~from whom~~ they derive their authority in every mode of conveyance, ought to render unto Him the things that are God's, personally themselves, and see that all under them do it also. God hath *civil religions, or civil moral rights*, which his *civil religions* ministers have committed to them to take care of. His day, his public worship, his name and word, ought to be respected: and plea of conscience can exempt any from their obligation in these matters. God as King of nations hath enjoined a religion which is of this world, which nations ought to observe, where only as such they exist, and can be rewarded or punished. Righteousness, as it respects God and man, exalteth a nation, but sin of any kind, is a reproach to a people.

It is righteousness and sin only in their overt acts, that the civil ministers of God can take cognizance of, and this he ought to do: and not suffer any pretence to conscience, to exempt any from their obligation to obey the first table of God's law as of *civil religions interpretation*, in overt acts, any more than the second. He can take cognizance of the ungodliness of any under the pretence of conscience, as well as he can of the murderer, who kills another, thinking he doth God service. Nor is the murderer a more hurtful member of society, than the openly profane and ungodly person. As sin in general is a reproach to a people, so none is more reproachful to a people, excepting it be withholding from God his dues, than *party lying*. Whether democratic, or federal lies are most numerous, I shall not determine, but this is probable, that if a duty was imposed on known falsehoods and lies, and all other duties were taken off, the treasury would suffer no diminution. A good cause needs no such means of defence, and a bad one is indefensible by any means. When evil means are used, it creates a suspicion that the cause is not good, at least, in the apprehension of the user of them.

Another thing blameable in these disputes is undue warmth, and manifest ill will. The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God, nor yet the conviction and conversion of the errorist from his way. If more studied to be quiet, and to do their own business, leading peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty, under the rulers we have, until constitutionally removed, if evil, it would be better



~~for them,~~ and the public. In this way we shall better maintain our independence, than in that which some pursue.

Our reputation hath been high abroad, but if a foreigner should come here, and take a fair view of the war of parties and the agitation of the whole body politic, he could not form a high opinion of us, and should he make a true report upon his return, we should not be thought highly of. What would surprise him most, if he was a religious man, would be our strange departure from the religious principles, habits and customs of our ancestors: our little care in choosing good persons to rule; and our excessive fondness for strangers of unknown or suspicious characters, to say no worse.

Few with our Fathers would go out to seek purity of worship elsewhere if persecuted ever so much here.

Many desire not to worship God at all, when they might do it unmolestedly; and their duty, interest, and the continued independence of their country require them so to do. The more dependent we are on God, the more independent we shall be on men.

May rulers and ruled, glorify God as King of nations, and of our nation in particular, and be thankful that He may continue to bless us with independence, prosperity and peace. But above all, may we so conduct towards God as King of Saints, that when we leave this land to our posterity, we may go to a better, even thine, O Emmanuel, where we shall be forever free and independent of all, excepting God all in all. AMEN.

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# S E R M O N.

## REVELATION XVI. 8. 9.

AND THE FOURTH ANGEL Poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given him to scorch men with fire. and men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues; and they repented not to give him glory.

**T**HE book of the Revelation contains a description of what John *had seen, the things which are, and which shall be hereafter*, from the time he was ordered to write, to the consummation of all things. The things that then were, are written in seven letters, to seven then existing Churches in the lesser Asia. The things that were then future are the contents of seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials. The seventh seal runs into the following trumpets, and the seventh trumpet into the following vials. This chapter, wherein is the text, gives an account of the third, and last Septenary, which is of the vials, or last plagues to be poured out upon the beast, or papal anti-christ. As the trumpets raised him up, the vials are to pull him down. And there is a great relation of the latter to the former.

All requisite preparations being made, "a voice comes out of the temple, to shew the divine authority for what was done, saying to the seven angels, Go your ways and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth."

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The trumpets are so many steps towards the ruin of the Roman Empire : but the vials effect the ruin of the Roman Church. But in polity and government they resemble each other, like the system of the world, both have their sun, earth, sea, and rivers. There is also some likeness of these plagues, to the plagues of Egypt. Rome Papal in Chap. xi. 8. is called Egypt ; and they are alike in their crimes and punishments. The first vial is poured out upon the earth : so the hail and fire of the first trumpet falls upon the earth. The earth being that on which we tread, build houses, and from it are supplied with the necessaries of life, it must here signify the foundation of the papal power, including the papal clergy ; dominions and revenues, which uphold their Church. The effect of this vial is a grievous *sore* upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them who worshipped his image. The sixth plague of Egypt was boils breaking out with blains. What this grievous *sore*, or ulcer, particularly means, is not certainly known. Mr. Fleming thinks it to have begun with the reformation, at the rise of Zuinglius and Luther, anno 1516, and ended 1564. But Bishop Newton thought it to be future when he wrote, Anno 1758. "The second angel poured out his vial upon the sea : and it became as the blood of a dead man :"<sup>1</sup> congealed blood : "and every living soul died in the sea."<sup>2</sup> v. 3.

The effect of the second trumpet, when a burning mountain was cast into the sea, was that *the sea became blood.* "The third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers, and fountains of waters ; and they became blood."

The effect of these two vials is similar to the first plague of Egypt, when its waters, streams, rivers, ponds, and pools, became blood. Seas and rivers of blood in prophetic language denote great slaughter. Mr. Fleming fixes this from 1556 to 1617 when there were terrible wars between papists and protestants, to the overcoming of the former with great loss of blood. But Bishop Newton refers it to a time future to him. In the 5th and 6th verses, the angel of the waters celebrates the righteous judgments of God in adapting and proportioning the punishment of the followers of the beast, to their crime. Nothing is more equitable than that they who have shed the blood of saints and prophets, should be gorged with blood. The eastern people

people supposed particular angels presided over particular nations, and also over particular elements, and particular parts of nature. In Chap. xiv. 18. we read of an angel who had *power over fire*, as here of an *angel of the waters*. Another angel, out of the altar, joins the angel of the waters, in celebrating the praises of the Lord God Almighty for his true and righteous judgments in v. 7. This brings us to the text, the pouring out of the fourth vial upon the Sun and the effect and consequence thereof. "And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the Sun; and power was given him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory." Expositors differ very much concerning the particular time intended by this vial; some think it past and others yet future. Mr. Fleming, who wrote a Sermon the beginning of the last century, applies this vial to the late affairs in France. He hath these words, "Perhaps the French may begin to be considerably humbled about that time: that whereas the present French King takes the Sun for his emblem, and this for his motto, *nec pluribus impar*, he may at length, or rather his *successors*, and the monarchy itself, (at least before the year 1793 or 4) be forced to acknowledge, that in respect to the neighboring potentates, he is even *singulis impar*." And with regard to their continuing to blaspheme God, and not repenting of their deeds to give him glory, he understands this to denote the prevalence of atheism, deism, Socinianism, irreligion, profaneness, scepticism, hatred of godliness, formality, and atrocious wickedness, which should abound for 16 years from 1793, or 4. And then the Sun of the papacy is to be eclipsed himself. "We may justly suppose, saith He, that the French monarchy after having scorched others, may consume by doing so: its fire and that which is the fuel that maintains it, wasting insensibly till it be exhausted at last, towards the close of this century." He hath in these conjectures one hundred years ago, some things very near, or quite the truth of facts; at least they are very accommodate to our times. And until some event takes place more applicable I shall think this fourth vial poured out on the Sun respects the scorching, which the principal powers of popery have lately experienced in  
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the late war, now happily closed. If the Sun means France as Mr. Fleming saith that is their emblem ; their scorching with fire and great heat, may well intend what they have felt, both internally, and externally, and caused others to feel, beyond what hath been ever known in common wars. They have been really *angry*, more blood hath been shed, and more devastation made, than ever was known in the same term of time.

Some who first engaged in the French revolution only sought a reasonable reform of government. But the invisible philosophical, and illuminated directors meant not so : their object was the total extermination of all religion and government. The jacobin club, and grand orient lodge of philosophical illuminees were the prime agents in the dreadful scenes that were passed through in that wretched kingdom. When they first begun their pretended reform, we wished them prosperity, expecting they were proceeding upon the sober, well directed principles of the American revolution ; but as soon as Robespierre, Marat, and others of the same class took the lead, no true American could wish them god speed. As execrable a set of men in principles and morals, as ever existed at once on this globe, aimed at extermination rather than reformation, and they did not confine their views to France only, but extended them to all Europe, and even to other parts of the world. The scorching fire and heat, unnecessarily destroyed millions, with circumstances of the most savage, barbarous, wanton and unheard of cruelty. Their foreign wars were carried on with great ferocity, and their insidious arts practised upon the Swiss, Dutch and Italians, deserve detestation.

But that which is chiefly aimed at in this discourse, is to notice the effect and consequence of the scorching fire and heat of this vial poured out on the Sun. " They blasphemed the name of God which hath power over these plagues ; and they repented not to give him glory."

If we look into the nations which have shared the most in the calamities of the European war, we shall find the effect, and consequence to be similar to the pouring out of this fourth vial. By the signs of the times we may know where we are.

In former times under the trumpet, superstition, idolatry and worshipping demons, prevailed: they were religious over much. They believed more than they needed to, and did many works of Supererogation. If in former times a calamity fell upon papists, they practised all manner of superstition, multiplied processions, observed festivals, went on pilgrimages, made donations, and vows as proper means, in their apprehension to avert, or remove judgments, and appease the Deity. But all this is past and gone. Atheism, deism, infidelity, and whatever is comprehended in blasphemy are now prevalent. The sentiments of Voltaire, D'Alembert, Diderot, Condorcet, Helvetius, Bolanger, or he who wrote Christianity unveiled, and others were early spread through France, and Germany: and the principles of illuminism directed their resolution. According to authentic documents, a confederacy was formed for the extirpation of all religion and government. It is true they were under popery, and despotism, not the best religion and government. But both far better than illuminism, and liberty and equality. The revolutionists did not desire a reform in either, but to suppress all religion, subvert all moral institutions, and social order. And what is their boasted government of liberty, and equality, but absolute despotism? Where are their rights of the people? Atheism or the denial of God's existence is encouraged and applauded: and the entrance of their Church yards, are marked with this horrid sentiment, "Death is an eternal sleep." Induce men to believe all this, and act up to it, and evil must ensue. The horrors of the French revolution were the natural effects of it.

If a reformation had been aimed at, in France, popery with all its absurdities would not have been re-established, or a worse despotism than ever they groaned under before. Popery with all its superstitions and absurdities is by no means equal to what the philosophists, call *Illuminism*.

Being unmasked, (and it hath been unmasked by Abbe Barruel, professor Robeson, and by Mr. Payson the author of the modern antichrist, which I would recommend to all to read, and to whom I am much indebted in this discourse) Being unmasked, it is an infernal destructive combination against the most precious interests of mankind. Its real nature

nature and tendency is directly opposite to its pretended, and avowed object. The principle and source of it, is a deep rooted enmity to all religious restraint, and especially is their enmity pointed against Christianity. If they acted under the influence of other motives, yet the above was the most predominant in the illuminees. By what they call *Cosmopolitism*, or worldly Citizenship, and their exercise of it, they shew themselves to be the genuine offspring of Apollyon the destroyer, the god of this world, for they aim at the destruction of all, who will not be dupes to their designs. Their morality means the uncontroled indulgence of all the corrupt propensions of their depraved natures, only preserving so much of an outside shew, as will enable them the better to impose the better upon mankind. What is the *liberty* they invite men to? Is it rational? Is it founded on law? Is it any thing but a blind subjection to the invisible and unknown guides of their order? The equality they join with liberty is a total repugnance to the order of nature, and nature's God: and their humanity is the extinction of all social affections, and emancipates them from all the parental, filial, fraternal, and sororal ties of nature. The honourable, comfortable, and beneficial institution of marriage, is to them insufferable: abortion is no crime, but every check to brutal indulgence is by them esteemed tyrannical. What is their philosophy but a jumble of theories contradicted by universal experience. Till this blasphemous age of reason, so called by one who wrote with as little of it as any man in it, an atheist was thought a prodigy, and scarcely supposed to exist, but now God would not be so blasphemed as he is, if he was supposed to exist. But with the men I am describing, their Creator is chance, and their future hope an everlasting sleep. But Voltaire, D'Alembert, could not in their last moments realize that hope, but felt the mighty hand of *Him* whom they blasphemously called that *Wretch*, crushing them under its insupportable weight. This verifies an expression of Dr. Young, "Men may live fools, but fools they cannot die:" Voltaire was more rational in his last *no sickness*, than he ever had been in all his life before. He acknowledged a power above, and would so far as he could have undone all that he had done, if the watchful sophister's around his bed had not prevented. The blasphemous illuminati and

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philosophists whom I am describing, believe any means lawful for the attainment of a good end : assassination, abortion, peculation, the subversion of all energetic government where they do not rule themselves, and of all social order. They covet property not their own, and will use any means to obtain it : men of property that have not power are sure to fall before them. They are never easy but in a storm, or projecting some revolutionary schemes for the disturbance of the peace of society. Such is illuminism, though I have not half described the deformed monster. This was the invisible mover and guide in the French revolution, and it would be happy for other nations if they were free from its influence.

Under all the fire poured out upon them in the vial of God's wrath, and under all their scorching, was there any acknowledgment of his hand, which hath power over these plagues ? Did they not blaspheme him the more and ridicule his institutions, and try all they could to abolish the very remembrance of them, changing the names of their months, and reckoning by ten days, instead of sevens, lest God's day should be remembered !

Look into other parts of Europe, where French principles and practices have spread, and see if the effect hath not been blasphemy and infidelity, and all increasing wickedness. These are spreading in Germany, and all popish Countries. The sober Swiss, and plodding Dutchman, have cause to rue the day that they ever heard of French liberty and equality, or felt their fraternal, rather infernal squeeze.

While we lament the progress of these principles and practices in Europe, we have just cause to be alarmed at our own situation. The coming of foreigners from Europe into these States, hath greatly hurt the principles and manners of native Americans. And the admitting these emigrants into various departments of government, hath been very injurious to us, and will be more so if persisted in.

It is not to our credit, or for our safety, to import rulers from Europe, men of unknown characters, or known to be not good. It is indeed not my design to enter so deeply into our political, as into our religious state, though in the former respect we have very much departed from those principles which served to procure, and establish our independence,



pendence, and render us so prosperous under our federal government. The legacy of WASHINGTON is forgotten, and the administration of ADAMS is evil spoken of, when it is evident to a demonstration, that whatever of prosperity we now enjoy is chiefly owing to their wise conduct. They were not infallible or perfect: they may have erred, but not to merit the clamor that hath been raised against them. They did well in preserving our peace with Europe. And the Country was well satisfied with their measures till very lately. For our present alteration of sentiments, and for our divisions there ought to be searching of hearts. Not to enlarge here. The growth of infidelity and scepticism, the neglect of public worship, and of the sabbath, and other divine institutions, are what I may be allowed to take notice of. They are not unfit politics for Ministers to treat of. That the above principles are increasing cannot be denied. And what can this be owing to, but the influence which the writings of the French philosophers have over some of our leading characters: or the invisible power of illuminism may secretly operate to bring revelation and public religious institutions into discredit.

The public worship of the King of nations is a duty nations as such owe to the Deity, which the civil religious ministers of God have no right to neglect themselves, or dispense with in those they govern. This institution, which in a civil politic view is so friendly to peace, order, and the well being of society, is growing into great neglect among higher and lower classes of people. And when heads of a nation for years together neglect his public worship, it cannot be considered as treating the Supreme King and God according to what He is. Example in the great especially if not good, is very apt to be followed by inferiors: and when God's worship is neglected by the higher and lower ranks in a nation, they may justly expect the vials of God's wrath to be poured out upon them. A man who hath twenty gods, is rather to be relied on, than the philosopher that hath no Deity at all. If public worship was attended upon as it used to be in our Fathers' days, many large Meeting houses, not to say our own, would be more decently filled than they are, unless it be upon some special occasion like the present.