

S E R M O N,

DELIVERED JULY 4th, 1808,

AT WALPOLE, N. H.

IN

COMMEMORATION OF THE ANNIVERSARY

OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

BY THOMAS FESSENDEN, A. M.

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN SAID TOWN.

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

WALPOLE, N. H.

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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

