

**THE PULPIT TESTED: A SERMON
DELIVERED AT THE CENTENNIAL
ANNIVERSARY OF THE
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN
GREAT BARRINGTON, DEC. 23, 1843**

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The Pulpit Tested: A Sermon Delivered at the Centennial Anniversary of the Congregational Church in Great Barrington, Dec. 23, 1843 by John Todd

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JOHN TODD

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J. Hopkins, Pastor.

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S E R M O N .

ISAIAH. 52 : 7.—How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings,—that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good,—that publisheth salvation ; that saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth.

WHEN we wish to make our thoughts touch the heart, we borrow aid from scenes of distress. He who should paint the mother fainting and sinking down on the rock, as her only son sank under the billows to rise no more, would understand human nature. Could the last shriek of agony which came from the drowning child be also painted, the picture would be more complete. The mournful songs of Jeremiah, which flowed from his harp while his land was in ruins, are full of what is tender, and simple as infancy.

“ Oh ! that my head were waters and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people.”

The imagery of my text is inimitable in force and beauty. How many desolations, often called whirl-winds, swept over the land of God's people ! How often did hostile armies over-run the country, burn their cities, destroy the inhabitants, cast down the altars of God, carry the people away into captivity, or drive them to find a refuge among the caves and dens of the mountains !

Suppose we look at them now, as often described in the book of Judges. They have sinned, and God punishes them by the hand of man. He lets the enemy come in like a flood. Fire and sword devour the land, and the few who can escape butchery, fly to the everlasting hills for refuge. The enemy occupy the country, keep a standing army

quartered upon it, occupying the principle cities to slay every one who may venture down from the fastnesses of the mountains. Their houses, their cattle and their food and clothing are all gone. The once beautiful Jerusalem is in ashes, and the bodies of their friends and countrymen are sleeping among the ashes. The fire on the altar of God is put out, and the white-robed sons of Levi are seen no more.

Now go and take your stand on one of the hills of Judah, at the close of a sultry summer's day. You see little groups standing here and there at the entrance of their caves. There is no music there, for the harp of Zion's daughter dares not breathe the evening song. They are telling the story of other days to their little ones; and the pale countenance, and deep-drawn sigh tell their own tale. But hark! I hear a shout! I see these groups rising up thicker here and there.

Hush! the shout increases; it is rolled from hill to hill and from mountain to mountain! What means it? It has long been hushed. Has the enemy followed them even there? No, no. But I see an old man who has toiled up the hills and the mountains under the sultry sun. His loins are girded up, for he has not stopped to eat. His staff is in his hand. He is covered with the dust of the hills but his presence has sent such a thrill of gladness through these aching hearts that his very *feet*, all dusty and unwashed, are beautiful! He comes to proclaim deliverance. Hear the shout. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings; that publish peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth."

This shout of gladness, more than once causing the captive people of God to creep