

THE BLOWING OF THE GOSPEL TRUMPET

Preached at North Street Chapel, Stamford, on Thursday
Evening, October 28, 1858
A POSTHUMOUS SERMON

"And it shall come to pass in that day that the great trumpet shall be blown; and they shall come that were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem." Isaiah 27:12

Ever since the fall, man has been so deeply sunk in ignorance of the only true God that it requires the special teaching of God in the soul to make him wise unto salvation, and this teaching is not always nor often felt to be of a very pleasant nature. Religion must be burnt in us. We have not to learn lessons of consolation, of sweet manifestations of Christ's love and blood, or sit at his feet and listen to his words, as Mary, merely; but we need frowns as well as smiles, the rod, and that very often, as well as the encouraging look.

Whatever a man may have known and felt of the sweetness and preciousness of the things of God in his soul, he soon forgets them, and except the Lord revives the work again and again in his heart, he soon slips into carelessness, carnality, and death, unless the Lord is pleased to bring him into some trial, to exercise his soul with some new rod or frown, and show him what he is as a sinner, and what God is as a Saviour. We find all the promises of the gospel made to the poor and needy. It seems as though the Holy Ghost had to give everything that he could devise in his love and infinite wisdom, to describe the state of man, and what the saints of God feel when the Lord takes them in hand, to teach them what is for their good.

We have not only a precious promise in our text, that "**the great trumpet shall be blown:**" but a description also of those to whom the promise is made; not only a description of the blowing of the great trumpet, but of the characters also who hear the sounds of the great trumpet—what they do and where they come to **worship—"in the holy mount at Jerusalem."** But we have also their state described, so that it seems as though they were the last persons to hear, believe, and live. In opening up these words I shall, with God's blessing,

I.—First, describe the characters spoken of in our text, which are depicted in this strong expression, "**those that are ready to perish in the land of Assyria and the outcasts in the land of Egypt.**"

II.—Secondly, the blowing of the great trumpet.

III.—Thirdly, what is the effect of the blowing of the great trumpet, that "**they shall come that were ready to perish from the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt.**"

IV.—And fourthly, what they shall do when they come, "**they shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem.**"

Now I will not say that these words have not a prophetic reference, so that they may have a bearing beyond an experimental meaning; but I shall let that pass; because we cannot have very clear notions of future events which may take place. The words are applicable to the children of God now, and instead of speculating, therefore, let us see how they bear upon things present.

The first character, then, spoken of is one **"ready to perish in the land of Assyria."** The Lord himself declares that none of his sheep shall perish, but they are within a hair's breadth of perishing; they never will sink into final despair, but they shall be so exercised in their feelings as to be on the borders of it, like that Amalekite, of whom we read, who was found after three days and three nights in the desert, and there was no breath in him; but they brought him to life, and gave him nourishment, and he was enabled to tell of what had been done in Ziklag: so the saint of God is brought very low and is almost gone when the Lord comes and raises him up.

And what is there to prevent the Lord from casting that soul into prison? Who is to pay one mite, much more all the debt? Now when the Lord comes with power into a sinner's conscience, it brings him off from all legal hope; he sinks down into a fit of despair. He looks up and sees an angry God, and within a guilty conscience. His prayers even, are mingled with sin, and the law says, "Pay me that thou owest," and then he is ready to perish. He cannot yield the obedience the law requires. The law never knows pity nor pardon; but keeps saying, "Do and live, disobey and die," and when any old sin, or all the long black catalogue of his sins is laid upon his conscience, and he thinks how this holy God has looked upon him from the days of his infancy to the present moment, and what that eye has seen, nothing but one long course of sin from the first hour that he drew his vital breath up to the moment when his conscience feels guilty before God, what anguish takes hold of him! He looks through all his life and cannot find a single spot wherein he is not guilty, and he says of his good actions they are vile! What he did in the service of God so far from being done with an eye to God's glory was done from hypocrisy! His

profession seems to be the blackest thing of all his black life. A man who feels this will feel ready to perish.

Again he is ready to perish with hunger. No one gives him aught to eat. He may sit under a legal minister, he talks to those with whom he is mixed up in profession, and as he does not know the sweetness of the gospel he is ready to perish with hunger. He is like the poor prodigal, there is bread in his father's house, enough and to spare; but he is starving. Now the dead professors never starve; for some can feed upon doctrines, others upon chaff, and others upon legal duties, ordinances, and rites, and ceremonies, duties in which the heart is not, and where there is not one gracious feeling in the whole matter; but the living soul cannot feed upon husks like these, he knows that nothing can save him but mercy revealed to his soul, and if mercy does not reach his soul, into despair he must sink, he must die an unpardoned sinner; he is in feeling gone to despair; he cries to the Lord, but thinks the Lord cannot hear; he reads book after book, but he cannot see anything that suits him; he is a child of God in the wilderness, and there is no water, no shadow of a great rock of love, no dropping of the dew of God's favour; therefore, in this wilderness he is falling in despair; he must hang on to something about himself and he lays hold of self-righteousness.

A man will always cleave to himself, and when he is ready to perish then he lies upon the sand without power to take hold of anything; he stretches himself on the sand without power to lift up a cry, and then he is ready to perish, and if he has had his evil heart opened up to him very much, he feels that he can be nothing less than a poor miserable creature. And Satan may come in and tell him to put an end to himself. He will say, "You are only adding sin to sin; because God will never pardon a sinner like you."

This is a man ready to perish, and though all the saints of God may not go so deep in the matter as this, yet they, for the most part, are brought down to be ready to perish; for if they were never ready to perish they would never hear the great trumpet blow. Have you never fallen down before God at night and felt that before morning your soul might be in hell? distressed in your conscience, seeing what an awful sinner you were! What an awful wretch! What a foul monster! If you have been exercised with these feelings you know what it is to be ready to perish.

But there is another character. The text speaks of the outcasts in the land of Egypt. There might have been a time with you when you were thought a nice person, whether you were among the church people or among the dissenters, you were everybody's choice, hardly anybody had a better word than you, and as long as you went with them they flattered you and you flattered them, and you got on very well; but when life came unto your soul, and the fear of God with life, and your conscience became tender before God, and you began to see yourself a sinner, you found that you could not hear the minister you did before, nor mix with the people you did before, and they thought something had happened to you, you were not so agreeable as you used to be; a change had come upon you, and now you are a very disagreeable person; you begin to find fault with the minister and the people; to you nothing seems right without or within, for when our consciences become exercised, and our eyes are in some measure opened, we begin to see things as regards others.

You may have felt an outcast yourself, and it is a very painful feeling until the Lord comes and tells us he has not cast us off; but dead professors will cast us out if we don't sanction and approve and give countenance to their deceitfulness and

deceitful actions, and if we speak conscientiously in these days. If we did but know what hearts these were that are not guided by soul realities we should understand how it is they cannot bear anything that brings dissatisfaction; they would have everything covered over.

But he whose soul is brought out of itself cannot sanction anything of this kind; he must have matters straight between his own soul and others. Therefore such a person must be a troubler, and he will very soon begin to be an outcast. Now the first step is to be cast out of the profane world and then out of the professing world, even cast out by many who fear God, because perhaps they have not walked in the same temptations, nor have they been exercised by the same trials, and even if some of the saints of God would receive us, we may feel ourselves cast out. All this is a time of trial, and then there is a further and still deeper trouble than that, which consists in feeling ourselves so vile, base, and foolish as to be unfit for the notice of God or men, to be cast out of the church and congregation as unfit for anybody's notice, quite undeserving of anybody's approbation.

I don't say that all the saints of God have to feel this to the extent I have described; but as a fisherman must cast his net pretty broad to catch the fish, so the minister must cast the net pretty broad to catch all the living fish. I don't mean to say all the people of God go to the same depths of being **"ready to perish,"** or are to the same extent "outcasts." But they all must know something of these states, and the depth of the work of God upon their soul, for the most part, will be proportionate to the experience of being ready to perish and of being an outcast.

The most painful is to be an outcast from God. What a painful feeling, to have sinned against God to such a degree

that he will not take any notice of us, that he has cast us out, and will not have anything to do with us any more! It is to be forsaken apparently of God and man, and there is nothing left but to die and to be put out of the way, or but a step between us and death! And then the devil will say, "Why not take the final step? What is there to live for, no friend or acquaintance to take any notice of thee, God hiding his face!" If the saints of God are outcasts of the world, the professing church, and seem sometimes cast out of God himself, what is to hinder them then from being cast into the lake of fire and brimstone?

II.—Why, what I come to in the second place, which is the blowing of the great trumpet. It shall hinder them. The **great trumpet means the Lord's trumpet**. It is a great trumpet because God himself blows it, and he blows through it blasts that waken the dead, which reach the ears of those who were ready to perish and enter into their heart and conscience; but for this text they would give up all hope and sink into despair. It is a great trumpet, being a trumpet that will enter the ears of those ready to perish, like the trumpet that shall waken the dead at the last day. This trumpet is the trumpet of the gospel figured by the silver trumpet, and it is to have a certain sound, or else it cannot be known what is the meaning, what the trumpet sounds. It resounds "Salvation! salvation! through the blood of the Lamb!" These are the sounds that issue out of the mouth of this great trumpet when the Holy Ghost blows it and gives it sweet melody. Salvation for those who are ready to perish! Salvation for the outcasts!

Now theirs are the ears which are open to hear the notes of this great trumpet, and when the notes of the great trumpet reach their ears and make a sweet melody in their hearts it awakens them. Even some of you may have been or are now

poor outcasts of God and man, and you will know where and what you are, and how your ears are open for the way of salvation, and every note that drops into your soul causes a looking up to the source whence that sound comes; as John in heaven, when he heard the voice of the blessed Redeemer as the voice of the great trumpet, turned to see the voice that spake unto him.

So when the soul hears the trumpet blow, he looks up to see what the great trumpet announces. As you know, in a procession you hear the sound of the trumpet, which tells you that the procession is coming, and it directs your eye to where the trumpet is. So it is when men hear the trumpet of the gospel, they are all ears to hear what sound that trumpet may bring to their hearts. What news! And when that trumpet begins to tell of salvation and justification, and that salvation is all of Christ, who is the justifier from first to last of all them that believe in the work of Christ, the finished work, and mercy to poor sinners flows through the atoning blood, it begins to raise up a feeling in the soul to believe; then new life is communicated and it appears as though the trumpet's sound had communicated help to the soul.

Like the soldiers in battle, though they may be weak and faint yet as soon as they hear the trumpet's sound to call them "to battle" they form themselves into their ranks and rush upon the enemy. So in a spiritual sense, when the gospel trumpet sounds and the Holy Ghost blows it, and the sound reaches the heart, it raises up faith, hope, and love so as to move the depths of the heart and to enter into the secret recesses and feelings of the soul. But it is brought to this. There is salvation in Jesus Christ and in no other. Here the door of hope is opened for the guilty, perishing sinner, here God is seen a God full of mercy, compassion, and love; and as the trumpet is sounding more and more, it falls with

more and more sweetness upon the heart, the grace, compassion, and mercy of God seem to enter the soul, with every note that the trumpet gives is Christ crucified and risen from the dead; but the voice of Christ is heard in the whole, and where he speaks there is life and power, faith and feeling, hope and love.

Has not your poor, dying, perishing, outcast soul sometimes been revived by the preached gospel? Power has reached your soul, and enabled you to believe in his blood and obedience and love; for it has come with such power and sweetness into your soul that it has raised you up and made you quite a new creature, and then you feel life communicated to your soul, that you can believe, hope, and love: it seems as though you could take one leap into the bosom of Christ, and embrace him as the very Bridegroom of your soul. The blessed trumpet makes such a sweet melody in the ears and hearts of those ready to perish, and of those poor outcasts who have neither hope nor help.

III.—And this brings me to my third point, What they shall do. **"They shall come that were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt."** They shall come: before, they could not come; they were too weak: they were ready to perish. What with the want of bread and water, and what with their terrible feelings, they were **"ready to perish."** They could scarcely lift one limb before the other to come to Jesus, and they were such **"outcasts:"** they felt so condemned, and so deserving of being cast out for ever and ever, that come they could not, they did not know how, they had scarcely a hope that he would take them, they were so afraid they should be rejected; therefore they feared that they might only add to their sin, hypocrisy, and presumption, and, therefore, they stayed away.

They feared that the invitation, "Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price," was not for them. But its freeness, blessedness, and sovereignty now communicate such power to their souls, and strength to their limbs, and hope and love to their hearts, that come they must and will. Hence the trumpet bids them "Come", the trumpet sounds in the ears of every miserable outcast and backslider. The trumpet sounds in the ears of all such, "Come ye to the wedding." As they hear these words, and the words seem to fall in with their feelings and to be suitable to them, then they come.

IV.—And to pass on to our fourth point, What do they do?

"They worship the Lord in the holy mount of Jerusalem." There is a holy mount at Jerusalem, Mount Zion, where Jesus sits, and where God has commanded the blessing, even life for evermore, and as the Apostle speaks, "Ye are come to Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." There is a Mount Zion which represents typically and figuratively the gospel of Jesus Christ and salvation by atoning blood and justifying obedience; then they come to Mount Zion, and there they are received favourably; for in Mount Zion there is not a single frown, or anything that can terrify or fright back.

In Mount Zion the blessing is even life for evermore; so that when the poor outcasts hear the trumpet they come to Mount Zion and find every blessing that is in the power of God to bestow and in the heart of Christ to give, and which is revealed in the gospel. For this and for every other mercy to be manifested to them, they come to the holy mount at Jerusalem, and they feel it a holy mount. There God dwells in his holiness; for great is the Lord and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. They

have been taught how great he is in a broken law; they have been taught he is a consuming fire. They revere his great and glorious name; for he is just in the law who is holy in the gospel, who is full of compassion. He is still Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord God of Sabbaoth! and they find it is a holy mount; for there are the holy promises and precepts, the holy worshippers, holy enjoyments, holy affections, and holy desires.

It is a holy mount; for there holiness supremely dwells, there the holiness of God is made specially manifest. Believers who know anything of the gospel desire to have holy love, holy affections, holy desires, to be holy inwardly and outwardly, without which no man can see the Lord. When the gospel comes, it brings with it holiness and power, which the law knows nothing of, and raises up holy affections, holy desires and feelings; so that they find that Mount Zion is not only a holy mount, but there they worship the Lord in the beauty of his holiness, in the sweet enjoyment of his manifested presence and love, and thus they worship Father, Son, and Holy Ghost with a reverential awe of the great name of God, and every spiritual and holy feeling that the Holy Ghost can and does raise up in a broken heart and tender conscience.

Here we have in our text all that true religion is from first to last, beginning with being ready to perish and being an outcast. Then we have the work of the law upon the conscience, and what God does to convince a man that he is a sinner, and make him to fear his great name, then we have the middle where the trumpet is blown, where the gospel blows its melodious tones, and where the sinner comes drawn to Mount Zion by the sweet melodious notes that sound from the holy mount. Then we have the worshipping of the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem, being filled with all holy desire, producing holy fruits, serving him in the gospel

of his dear Son; and here we have a sweet and most blessed end.

Now have you experienced anything in the law or in the gospel, in the precept or in the promise, in the teaching of the Holy Spirit and the whole list of what the saints of God must know so as to be saved with an everlasting salvation? Can you lay hold on any part of this in your conscience that you have experienced in your soul? Any part of it; for you may perhaps be one ready to perish or an outcast, who sees nobody so bad as yourself, and fear that you may be cast out for ever; or you may have heard with sweet appropriation the melodious notes of the gospel, and delight in what you hear as being a sound so suitable to you; or you may have got to Jesus and there found pardon and peace, and you may be at times enjoying his sweet presence and worshipping the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem; but in his own good time and way the saints will go through all these spots; and where the Lord has begun, he will carry on, and no man shall pluck them out of Jesus' hand.