

Prophecy Spiritually Understood - Pt 5 'Two Thousand Years of Armageddon'

by Charles Alexander

The sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual understanding in interpreting prophecy, rejecting literalism and advocating for a Pauline approach to understanding the Old Testament.

Scripture: 1 Samuel 17:46, Ezekiel 37:1, John 17:21, Ephesians 6:12, Revelation 20:7

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Kingdom Of God"

Description

Charles Alexander delivers a powerful sermon on the spiritual warfare depicted in the visions of Ezekiel, emphasizing the ongoing battle between the forces of light and darkness, the eternal conflict between the Kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of Satan. He challenges the congregation to recognize the real enemy as the theological-scientific philosophy denying the supernaturalism of the Bible and the moral nature of the universe, leading to the current societal decay and moral degradation. Alexander urges believers to stand firm in their faith, prepared for potential persecution and martyrdom, as the final phase of the spiritual battle unfolds, emphasizing the victory of Christ's Kingdom over the forces of evil.

Transcript

THE COVENANT, THE DRY BONES AND ARMAGEDDON

For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect. (Romans 4:14)

Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. (Galatians 5:2)

The Jew is of the law and circumcision. These two things constitute Israel and Jewry. It is not sufficiently perceived by evangelical expositors that there can be no restoration of earthly Israel to divine favor without the complete abrogation of those very rites which make the Jew a Jew. Paul argues that the Jew as a Jew cannot be an heir (of the promise made to Abraham) without making promise and faith of none effect. He must cease to be a Jew distinctively if he would be a citizen of the Kingdom of Grace.

We challenge our gentile expositors (in their enthusiasm for Jewish restoration) to say if Ezekiel is speaking spiritually or 'literally' when he demands that not only Jews but gentiles be circumcised 'in flesh' before being allowed access to the Millennial sanctuary described in the concluding chapters (40-48).

Here are his words: "Thus saith the Lord God; No stranger uncircumcised in heart, nor UNCIRCUMCISED IN FLESH, shall enter into my sanctuary, of any stranger that is among the children of Israel.

(Ezekiel 44:9)

If our friends hold to their principle that Ezekiel is to be literally understood when he writes of the new temple they must on the basis of this verse hold to the doctrine of the restoration of circumcision both for Jew and gentile as the passport into divine favor and acceptance - and away goes Paul, away goes the gospel, and away goes Christ and the cross. Literalism abolishes the gospel, brings back the rabbis with their nationalistic interpretations, and establishes the law and works in place of faith and grace.

Let our readers be quite clear on this point. Paul in Galatians and Romans teaches that the law and circumcision are ended and are hostile to the gospel. Our literalists say, "No, Law, temple, circumcision and animal sacrifice for sin must be re-established", even if the deed can only be done on the ruins of the gospel and the abolition of the cross of Christ.

Who now is the heretic? We who stand for the cross of Christ, for faith, grace, the Spirit, the promise? Or the literalist who stands for Jew, temple, law, circumcision, priest-craft, reeking alters, sin offerings of bulls, rams and goats? For that, dear reader is the choice.

If our Judaizing friends seeing their danger cry, "Hold! We only literalize some things, and we will spiritualize those other where we see danger ahead", we reply, "You cannot do this. You cannot accommodate yourselves to Ezekiel 44:9 by suddenly declaring you have made a mistake about Ezekiel's temple; it is of course a picture of the gospel, of Christ and the Church - you cannot, we say, do this without surrendering also every other scripture which has to do with Jewish restoration. For on the same principle on which you now accept one formidable part of Ezekiel's prophecy to be a spiritualizing of Jewish figures, so must you accept other parts of Ezekiel which refer to the same period and the same glorious promise.

Brethren, it seems extraordinary to us that because of the present rabbinical fog which has blinded the thought of evangelical expositors for so long, it is WE who are regarded as the disturbers of the peace, as inconsistent, and as plotting to take the divine meaning out of scripture, when it is they who are destroying the gospel and bringing back circumcision and all the apparatus of the law which Christ took away once for all by His glorious atoning death.

"If they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect. Behold, I Paul say upon you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing."

Let that be the prelude of what we now have to say, and a guide to all our readers in the further pursuit of these studies to re-establish the true spiritual understanding of the prophets. Because of the prevailing rabbinical and destructively literal theories, the evangelical pulpit has for a long while turned sour; preaching has declined, sermons are arid, great areas of the Bible have been sealed up, and there is a famine of the Word. We dedicate ourselves for our remaining days to destroying this evil thing which has drained the lifeblood of the evangelical cause.

ABRAHAM'S NATIONS

Paul has given us in Galatians and Romans the only valid rule of prophetic interpretation. He shows us that the Old Testament in all its parts is a preparation for the Church and the gospel, and not a field of

Judaistic speculation and Jewish privilege. In Romans 4 (never so far as we know quoted by the literal school in connection with their theories) Paul gives us the name of Abraham as a key to the understanding of the Old Testament mysteries. Abram became Abraham to denote he would be the father not of one, but of many nations "according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be". (Romans 4:16-18). In other words, Abraham is the father of a gospel seed and of no other. "So shall they seed be". By no stretch of the imagination can this 'seed of Abraham' be limited to the Jew. Abraham's new name was prophetic of the purpose of God in him, to make him the father of all the redeemed and elect 'nations' who were to share with him the same inheritance of justification by faith and free and sovereign grace.

"Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham, for a father of many nations have I made thee." (Genesis 17:6)

"Therefore it is of faith, that it might be of grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed: NOT TO THAT ONLY WHICH IS OF THE LAW (that is, of Israel according to the flesh), but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all." (Romans 4:16)

"All the seed", "all Israel" (Romans 11:26) and "all the house of Israel wholly" (Ezekiel 11:15) are identical - the covenant people, Jew and gentile without discrimination, who are in all ages and to the end of time, the only seed of Abraham to whom the promises are made, the elect seed of the New Covenant, the brethren of Christ, the heirs of salvation.

The Israel of which Abraham is only the natural father is not to be confused with the mystic Israel of redemption, of which he is the spiritual father, and it is to this mystic Israel alone that the promises are made.

The great promise through Abraham was made when that illustrious man was uncircumcised, and this, says Paul (Romans 4:9-18) indicates that the promise belonged to the uncircumcised gentile as much as to the believing Jew.

The land is a figure

There is therefore no inconsistency in applying Paul's 'rule of prophecy' to those passages in the O.T. prophets which present the gospel and the gospel church in terms of national restoration, the re-peopling of the desolate land the clothing of the ancient valleys with a prosperous and teeming agriculture. The inconsistency is on the part of those who, seeing only the natural, and obsessed with rabbinical, the Judaistic interpretations (the same which blinded the Jews of Christ's day and caused them to reject and crucify the Lord of glory) repeat in the 20th Century the same Judaistic fable of earthly glory for Israel, and fight fanatically to deprive themselves and all other gentile believers, of the promises of God, all of which are fulfilled in Christ and nowhere else. (See 2 Corinthians 1:20)

If the thing had not happened before our very eyes and been a burden on our mind and conscience for the last 40 years, we would not have believed such a delusion possible.

Paul shows there is only one true Israel - the Israel of God, the Church (Gal. 6:16), and all O.T. scripture must be bent to this rule, and not the N.T. bent to fit into Jewish interpretations of the O.T. There is only one gospel, one Kingdom, one Church and one people. There was none before and there will be none after. The next event is the Second Coming of Christ, the judgment seat, the resurrection of just and unjust, the rolling up and disappearance for ever of the material Heaven and earth - one tremendous and

simultaneous event. The only millennium is the gospel age, the only regathering of Israel is the gathering out of the elect seed by the preaching of the Word, from all nations and languages (now surely nearing completion), and the new heavens and earth promised are not the old creation renovated, but the eternal, spiritual state.

How is it then that our Judaizing friends taken up with such confidence the 36th and 37th chapters of Ezekiel and remove from the table of the elect church of Christ those precious portions and throw them to a future generation of Jewish farmers, along with the Everlasting Covenant of Grace, sealed by Christ with His own blood and presented in visible form to us in the symbols of the bread and wine of the communion feast? We fight to our dying breath against this conspiracy to unchurch the church and deprive believers for the last 2,000 years of any prophetic ground for their existence. For if our friends are right to hand over Ezekiel 36 and 37 to the earthly Jew, there remains nothing in the O.T. which is sacred to the Church.

Shame Upon Them!

Shame upon the Authors and preachers who for the last 150 years have with incredible infatuation taken delight in uprooting themselves from their own foundations and hewing down their own holy temple of God's saving grace, to make way for a new and blasphemous temple - a third temple in history - of stone and lime and timber, of blood and hair and bones, to mock at the true and only temple constructed by Christ of living stones and of which He is most blessedly the chief corner stone. Shame upon them that on the basis of their false interpretation of Ezekiel they should delight to tell us a new sacerdotal priesthood of Aaronic and Levitical origin should be reconstituted to supplant that of Christ, our true and heavenly Melchizedec. Shame upon them that they should take away our New Covenant which Christ sealed with his own blood and award it back to the Jew to whom it never belonged.

It is of great significance that the author of "The Restoration of Israel" directs us in his chapter on "Prophetic Principles" to ask ourselves the question, "What meaning did the words (i.e. of any O.T. prophecy) have to those to whom it was directed at the time of its utterance? If directed to Jews - and we should bear in mind that almost all our Lord's words were directed to Jews - how would they understand the phraseology?" (page 27).

This appeal to Jewish opinion and Jewish interpretation to offset the spiritual interpretation of prophecy, is the clearest possible refutation of the writer's conclusions. It is also the clearest possible demonstration of our case against the literalists. Here we have it in cold print that we are to go to the Jew for our understanding of the O.T. prophecies. This is what we have been saying all along, that modern evangelical prophetic exposition is derived from the rabbis.

We know only too well how the Jews "understood the phraseology". So confident were they that the literal was the rule of prophecy that they crucified the Lord of glory and to this day, whether in Palestine or in New York or in London, fanatically deny that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, and so fill up the measure of their father's sins.

Our author has overlooked the Pauline advice on the understanding of the O.T. Paul tells us there is a "hidden wisdom" imparted only to the elect Church of Christ, by which alone the Word of God is to be understood:

"Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world that come to naught: but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden

wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew, for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." (1 Cor. 2:6-8)

Neither in the days of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, nor in the days of Christ on earth, nor in our day, has the Jew understood the prophecies, but always by interpreting them literally and for himself, he falls into the fatal snare which has led to his destruction. Yet our author seems to wish us to consult the Jew to obtain from him the key to prophecy! Oh, fie!

We appeal to all men of good will to look around and see if we do not speak the truth which we say that these carnal theories of prophecy have robbed the church of its spiritual treasures and impoverished the evangelical pulpit.

When was there a day since the Reformation, when preaching was so discreditable and the evangelical pulpit so sour?

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The Covenant Belongs to the Church of the Redeemed

Turning to the glorious covenantal revelation in Ezekiel 36 we have no hesitation in claiming it for the church, the true Israel of God, "the house of Israel wholly" (Ezekiel 11:15) which we showed in our last chapter to be the election of grace, the brethren of Christ, the kindred of Emmanuel - the people of redemption who are always the subject of the holy promises of God in the prophets.

To whom else do these words belong, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean. From all your filthiness and from all you idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh"? (Ezekiel 36:25-26 etc.)

Back to "holy water"

If our friends insist on their literalism, we must require of them literal application of holy Old Testament water to cleanse the dirt away from the literal skins of literal Jews. But if the water is the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, and the new heart is a heart renewed after the divine holiness, then the people to whom the word is directed are spiritual people and not the literal nation of the Jews.

How often these very verses are used and quoted in gospel sermons to gentiles without any sense of inconsistency, by the very people who accuse US of poaching upon Jewish preservatives by bringing the gentile church into view?

Who now, my brethren, are guilty of prophetic inconsistency? Our Judaizing friends or our insignificant selves who dare to claim the whole for the brethren of Christ, His redeemed kindred, that "house of Israel wholly" whom the proud inhabitants of the earthly Jerusalem despise and to whom they say, "Get you far from hence; to us is this land given for a possession"? (Ezekiel 11:15)

Judge O Lord between us.

The Kirk of Shotts

Was it not from this very passage that John Livingstone at the Kirk of Shotts preached and exhorted for two hours at a Scots communion coventicle in the open air away back in the 17th Century? The brethren of Christ were approaching the beginning of that awful period in Scottish history when the covenant was trampled upon and the people of God were harried and slain, tortured and dispossessed, shot and mangled and put to shame because they were the kindred of Christ. We are aware that John Livingstone's preaching from that text does not confer upon his interpretation the divine imprimatur, nor that the instant conversion or bringing to assurance of above 600 of his auditors in itself proves anything one way or the other, but at least it is a thing of which all sensible people should take notice.

If Mr. Livingstone had obeyed our literalists he would have qualified his message with the proviso that his application to a gentile audience was not strictly speaking valid, and that he was speaking only with apology to the Jew. We fancy this would not have added much to the assurance he sought to convey to his anxious hearers.

"I will put my spirit within you..." declares the Lord through Ezekiel. Is this not to be born again? And does this Word not belong without distinction of race or time to all who repent and believe? Was this not the substance of Christ's rebuke to the Pharisee Nicodemus with his Judaistic notions of a messianic kingdom to which all Jewry by birth belonged merely because they were the natural children of Abraham? "Art thou a master in Israel, Nicodemus, and knowest thou not these things, that except a man be born again of water and the spirit he will never see or enter into that messianic kingdom of God"?

Knowest thou not, Nicodemus, the meaning of the word 'whosoever' taken from thine own prophets (John 2:28-32), that it applies not to earthly Israel but to the whole world of Jew and gentile without distinction, in the sphere of redemption? (John 3:14-17)

Christ gives this same glorious word to Peter on the day of Pentecost, or Peter declares the Pentecostal outpouring to be the fulfillment of Joel, and the N.T. Church to be the field of that grand declaration, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved". (Acts 2:16-21).

The Water as a symbol of the Spirit

Was it not from this very passage in Ezekiel 36 that the Lord was quoting to show Nicodemus his Jewish error, when He, the Lord, spoke of being born of water and the spirit? That water is not baptismal water nor the holy water of Rome, nor yet the ritual ablutionary water of the Mosaic code, not yet even the not-quite-near-enough venture of many good evangelicals that it is the water of the Word. It is the water of the Spirit, the same water Christ was referring to when conversing with the Samaritan woman, and the same water He spoke about to the Jews in the last day of the feast, "He that believeth on me AS THE SCRIPTURE HATH SAID, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.... This spake He of the Spirit which THEY THAT BELIEVE ON HIM SHOULD RECEIVE...". (John 4:13-14; John 7:37-39)

If Christ was quoting Ezekiel in these passages and also from the later passage in Ezekiel relating to the living waters which were to - and where else? - Then Christ was interpreting the O.T. scriptures spiritually and not literally, and again the case put forth by our opponents is shown to be the rickety theories of the rabbis of which Nicodemus had much need to be purged.

Ezekiel 36 therefore refers to a gospel region, not a Jewish region. He says in verse 10, "I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, even all of it (note that repetition and compare with Ezekiel 11:15) and the cities shall be inhabited and the wastes shall be builded." He is not describing a landscape in

Palestine, but clothing a spiritual promise with the drapery of an earthly scene, as he later does with his description of the new temple which never existed and never will exist as an actual thing, but only in the vision of the prophet.

Dwelling in the land does not mean (verse 28) restoration to Palestine. Prophecy takes the local geography and clothes it with the spirit, and this is where the Jews of Christ's day went astray, and where our evangelical preachers and writers likewise have gone astray. Hence it is they have only a carcass to feed upon instead of heavenly manna.

If our readers prefer to go along in the company of the Sadducees believing that land means land, trees mean trees and corn means corn, there is nothing we can do to stop them, but if God gives us grace and time we hope to prove to them that they live in a valley of dry bones from which there is no resurrection.

Let our friends boast of their Judean landscapes, and look fondly for mountains, streams and trees. We will have the spiritual reality shadowed forth by these temporalities - the Kingdom of God which is within us, of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost (Romans 14:17).

THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES

This brings us to Ezekiel's 37th chapter with its valley of dry bones where dwell most of the Jewish and gentile expositors awaiting a resurrection which never comes.

This chapter is blindly adopted by the literalist as being a description of the restoration of the Jewish people to Palestine and to the divine favor.

The author of the "The Restoration of Israel" who wavers between the spiritual and literal like an acrobat on a tight-rope, claims Ezekiel 37 as conclusive of an earthly restoration of Israel while at the same time allowing what he describes as a 'teleological' application to the restoration from Babylon and even the time of Pentecost. But (and here is the rub) he envisions in it the restoration of national Israel both spiritually and territorially, "not merely a remnant, but the whole body of people is to enjoy the new covenant". (Pages 89-91) We pass over the fact that our author elsewhere denies that the whole body of the Jewish people will ever be converted, and is satisfied with a 'token' conversion of a 'sufficient number' to "make it appear" that the nation is converted.

Nowhere does he tell us how he can consistently apply both spiritual and literal fulfillments to this crucial passage of Ezekiel, and after allowing for a Pentecostal fulfillment go on to claim the real fulfillment in literalistic terms, but this much we do know, that in order to establish his position he actually asserts that the Jewish fulfillment "applies to a period richer and fuller in scope than that of Pentecost".

Against that appalling conclusion we enter a most solemn protest and ask our well-disposed readers to consider to what lengths literalism is driven in order to establish its Judaistic theories.

We assert on the contrary that the literalist view of Ezekiel 37 is untenable for these reasons:

1. No one, not even the rabbis, has ever taught that there was a valley of dry bones, or that Ezekiel stood in the middle of it during his Chaldean exile, or that the bones came together into orderly skeletons, were clothed with flesh, then came to life when the four winds blew upon them.

No, they all agree, this is only a vision presenting a reality under the form of material figures.

2. The chapter contains conclusive tokens that it is to be spiritually understood of gospel redemption and nothing else. This proof is in verse 24: "And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd...."

No serious commentator holds that David the king literally will be resurrected to sit upon a throne in Jerusalem from which to rule Israel again. All agree that David here means Christ, the Son of David. The embarrassment of a literal David is too deadly to contemplate. Yet if David is to be spiritually understood in the very heart of this chapter, his reign and his throne must likewise be spiritually understood, for who can contemplate the Lord of Glory vacating an eternal throne in the heavens to sit down upon a piece of tawdry upholstery in a house in Jerusalem? And is this the Second Coming of Christ, before whose dazzling countenance the heaven and the earth shall flee away? Is this the God who said, (as quoted by Stephen in the hours of his martyrdom), "Heaven is my throne and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? Saith the Lord, or what is the place of my rest? (Acts 7:49)

Is this the Christ who said to the woman at the well, "Neither in this mountain NOR YET AT JERUSALEM...."?

The reign of Christ is NOW or it is never. "All power IS given unto me in heaven and in earth", He said as He ascended into heaven. For two thousand years of historic time He has reigned at the right hand of power, expecting till all His foes are made His footstool. He reigns now, and has reigned since His glorious Ascension, an HE MUST REIGN, not when but till his enemies, including the last enemy, death, is destroyed. (1 Cor. 15:25-26). We need not look for Christ to come again until that simultaneous moment when all foes are subdued, and death is abolished. How say our friends therefore that Christ shall reign on earth during some fancied millenary, when even according to the most optimistic theory of the millennium, death shall continue its awful havoc amongst the teeming multitudes of sullen unbelievers, who await the reappearance of a loosed devil to mobilize them once more at the end of the golden age of Christ's fancied paradisiacal reign over a renovated earth, only to become fuel for fire when Satan's last little season is up, and devouring fire, like that of Sodom sweeps down in one mighty holocaust of final death.

Death Reigning with Christ!

Brethren, who now is the heretic? Who now is the real believer in Christ's reign? Who now ought to apologize and repent in dust and ashes for having deceived almost the entire evangelical world with the delusion that Christ is going to reign on earth physically and visibly in a house in Jerusalem, surrounded by funeral corteges and the knelling of funeral bells, as a myriad corpses, during the thousand years of His fancied reign, are added to the piles of human rottenness stinking in the graves?

We shall never cease to protest against this awful heresy while there is breath in our bodies.

3. The dry bones in Ezekiel's valley are of "the whole house of Israel" (37:11). But we have already seen from Ezekiel 11:15 that in Ezekiel's language this phrase is to be prophetically understood of Christ's elect brethren and kindred in redemption (see our last issue - # 041-4). It is therefore proven in advance that the bones are not those of earthly Israel, but those elect people whom the earthly Israel foreshadowed, and whom the breath of God raises again from their spiritual graves on a glorious spiritual resurrection, as described by Christ in John 5:25: "The hour is coming, AND NOW IS when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live".

Oh glorious first resurrection - the resurrection to life, redemption, and victory over sin and the grave! The rabbis and their followers would deprive us of these glories, but we refuse to be impoverished by these deadly theories of literalism.

The Everlasting Covenant Not Jewish

Our third proof that we are in spiritual territory in Ezekiel 37 lies in the fact that it is the everlasting covenant of peace which is described in verse 26. "I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will place them and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore...."

If this be not a spiritual scene, then there is nothing spiritual in the Bible. God's sanctuary is either a Third Temple at Jerusalem, or it is His invisible dwelling in the hearts of His people. We have already shown there can be no third temple (and we shall prove this further when we come to Ezekiel's closing vision). Therefore this sanctuary of God can only mean the gospel indwelling, the power of the Holy Spirit: "Dwelling in the land" is a figure in prophecy for entering into the privileges of God's favor. It was a heavenly, not an earthly country, which Abraham sought (Hebrews 11:16). It was a spiritual not an earthly inheritance which Christ announced when proclaiming the setting up of His New Testament kingdom - "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5). The Fifth Commandment announced through Moses conveys the same principle - "Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee". The land is always the symbol for the privileges of redemption, and never an end in itself. The geographical country of Palestine was an O.T. pledge of a N.T. grace. It is here the Jews went astray in their Messianic teaching, and they have led modern evangelicalism astray likewise, so that good men actually believe with great enthusiasm that the Jews will be restored to an earthly inheritance and will have all the gentiles to act as servants to them - including the good men referred to, who will be hewers of wood and drawers of water for a thousand years, in the service of their Jewish masters, as the Gibeonites of Joshua's day.

The everlasting covenant of Ezekiel 37:26 was drawn up before the foundation of the world in the Counsel of Peace of the Holy Trinity. It was sealed in time by the blood of Christ who fully carried out the Father's will as the Eternal Son. Under the terms of that covenant of grace and peace, the Holy Spirit was poured out for the effectual calling, spiritual resurrection, sanctification, and eternal glory of the elect seed whose Redeemer precedes them through the grave, the first fruits of them that sleep.

It is not a Jewish covenant, and it has naught to do with geography or racial boundaries. The "land" which is pledged in the words of the prophet, is that of which geographical Palestine was only a temporary foreshadowing. The reality beyond the shadow of those ancient hills and forests, the fields and cattle, is the invisible, spiritual and eternal kingdom of Christ.

When God declares through Ezekiel that "the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore", He means that in the days of His gathering of the spiritual Israel among whom He dwells in His sanctuary for ever, the enemies of the gospel show by their very spite and hatred of the elect people, that God is God. The unbelieving world denies to the people of God their right and title to heaven. In how many ages has the papacy thrust the people of God away in contempt and harried them to the death, for no other reason than that their very existence is to anti-Christ a token of his coming destruction.

In short, the resurrection in the Valley of Dry Bones is already recognized by all parties to be a spiritual resurrection; the bones cannot be those of a rejected people who lived thousands of years ago. There is no resurrection of the dead till the great Judgment Day. The bones which Ezekiel saw could only be those of the spiritually dead who were or are or will be carnally alive, yet dead in trespasses and in sins. The bones therefore are representative of no-one except those who are chosen and predestined to be spiritually alive for evermore.

Moreover it is not a resurrection which takes place at one time, but a continuous resurrection which has gone on now for well nigh 2,000 years, during which dead souls from every race and clime have been called like Lazarus from their spiritual death by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit and assembled into that spiritual land, empire and kingdom of Him who lives, and was dead, and behold, He is alive for evermore and has the keys of death and of hell.

The resurrection which Ezekiel sees is simultaneous only for the purposes of the vision - like the great battle which we are now about to describe. Resurrection from spiritual death and the battle of Armageddon are spread over the last 2,000 years of time.

GOG AND MAGOG AND THE CONSPIRACY AGAINST THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST

We now turn to one of the most difficult and mysterious parts of prophecy - the uprising of the powers of this world (figured in Gog and Magog) against the Kingdom of Grace established by Christ in His atoning death and glorious resurrection and exaltation to the right hand of power.

It is our purpose to show that this great revolt is not a solitary event at the end of time, but the entire history of the Church's conflict with the powers of evil over the last 2,000 years concentrated and figured in one idealistic campaign representative of the whole. We shall also endeavor to show that there is (as indeed there must be) a concluding phase of this age-long conflict, of paramount significance to those now living, and reading these lines.

We have seen that Ezekiel stood midway between two worlds - before and after the destruction of Jerusalem. The signal for transition of the prophetic movement from the one to the other was given in the arrival of the fugitive from Jerusalem with the cry, "The city is smitten" (chap. 33:21). Upon this moment the entire book of Ezekiel is hinged. Thereafter the tone of the prophecy changed to glorious promises of exalted destiny. The survivors of the Chaldean catastrophe, now in exile in Babylon, had learned no lesson. They were filled with a proud and incurable delusion that they were still the chosen people: "Abraham was one and he inherited the land; but we are many: the land is given to us for inheritance" (verse 24). In other words they boasted that if Abraham possessed the land though he was only a solitary individual, how much more would they possess it who were many in number. God's reply to this intemperate boasting was to remind them of the sins which had caused their expulsion - idolatry, bloodshed, impiety, adultery - "And shall ye possess the land"? (Verses 25-26) They despised the word of Ezekiel by treating it as an entertainment. (Verses 30-33) They heard his words but did them not.

There followed chapter 34 with its promise of the renewal of the Kingdom, but not in its old form. This time it would be an everlasting kingdom, with the Good Shepherd Himself caring for His sheep, establishing with them the new covenant of peace, and reigning over them as great David's greater Son. This fulfillment began with John 10 and the New Testament.

The parenthetical chapter relating to Esau intervened (chap. 35) and the prophet then launched upon his New Testament ministry in chapter 36 - a ministry which continues to the end the book, concluding with the evangelical promise concerning the New Testament Jerusalem - "The name of the city from that day shall be, Jehovah Shammah - the Lord is there".

The incompetence of the evangelical pulpit today to handle these mysteries is beyond question (as it is equally beyond description) and this aridity derives largely from the literal theories which do service today for the holy science of exegesis.

In no part of the Divine Word is this more exemplified than in the treatment accorded to the book of Ezekiel which is largely a closed book to the pulpit and an enigma to the pew. Yet no book is more rewarding to those who devote themselves to its understanding.

After his earlier visions which have to do with the impending destruction of the Jewish temple, priesthood and throne, Ezekiel is permitted to show the rising again of the Kingdom of God in its mystical form in Christ. He sees the operation of a new and everlasting covenant to take the place of the one under which the nation had failed. There was to be an inward cleansing of the heart and mind to take the place of the outward ceremonial washings of the Law. The Spirit of God would be outpoured in the great Pentecostal effusion which inaugurated the New Kingdom and Covenant in Christ (chap. 36). (Acts 2 describes the historical event of this outpouring at Pentecost, reinforced in Peter's sermon with its proof passage from Joel 2:28-32).

This glorious prospect is further illustrated by the vision of Valley of Dry Bones and the resuscitation to life by the breath of the Spirit of God (chap. 37). This is the great gospel resurrection described by the Lord in John 5:25 - the dead hear the voice of the Son of God and THEY WHO HEAR, LIVE. THIS IS NOT THE "RESTORATION OF (NATURAL) ISRAEL", BUT THE REGENERATING POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT THROUGH THE GOSPEL DURING 2,000 YEARS PAST.

In this same chapter we see the divided kingdom reunited under the sceptre of the mystical David - Christ - with the holy sanctuary of God in the midst of the New Covenant territory (let him who reads, understand). This conclusion proves we are in the realm of the Spirit, not in the region of the earthly and literal.

THE TRUE ARMAGEDDON

There now comes into view the kingdom of Satan which Christ came to destroy (Genesis 3:15). It appears in the form of the revived heathenism of Gog and Magog (Ezekiel 38-39). The vision shows that the powers of darkness war in vain to destroy and overcome the N.T. Kingdom of Christ. In these chapters we are not in earthly territory at all. This is spiritual and gospel country (as the preceding chapters, and the phase of Ezekiel's ministry show). This is the land of the New Covenant of Grace.

In this territory we war not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers of hell; against the (spiritual) rulers of the darkness of this world against spiritual wickedness in high (i.e. heavenly) places (Ephesians 6:12). This is the much - written- about battle of Armageddon which amateur and careless prophetism and apocalypticism mistake for a Russian WAR AGAINST THE JEWS.

The Ecumenical Question

"The heathen shall know" is the keynote of this part of the vision (chap. 36:23; 37:28; 38:23 etc.). Those who are concerned today about the ecumenical question may perceive that there is a reference here to their favourite text in John 17:21: "That they all may be one... that the world may believe that thou hast sent me". This verse is a divine commentary on the passages noted above from Ezekiel. But it does not mean what the ecumenicalists suppose. What is being declared in Ezekiel, and in John 17, is that the kingdom of Christ is a unity - Jew and gentile in one body, inseparable, as God Himself is one in the unity of the Trinity: "He hath made both one -of twain, one new man". (Ephesians 2:14-16).

The words of Christ have no more to do with the organic unity of Christendom, or even the visible unity of all evangelical people, than light has to do with darkness. The 'belief' referred to in the words of Christ ("that the world may believe that thou has sent me") is not evangelical belief, but the faith of devils, who also believe and tremble. The essential unity of Christ and His people is spiritual and invisible, but the power of it and the fact of it is manifest in the world, so that the world is forced to recognize that these are the people of God - and hate them the more because of it, according to that other word of Christ spoken just before His prayer in the 17th of John - "Because ye are not of the world, but I have chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you". (John 15:19)

Christ as always was quoting from the words of the prophets which He himself had inspired by His Spirit within them (1 Peter 1:11), from the foundation of the world, in preparation for His own coming. In His great prayer He quoted from His own word to Ezekiel (and other prophets likewise) to overturn the slanders of the world against His covenant people whose troubles under the Old Covenant were so lamentable but who now under the New Covenant were elevated the highest rank of the divine favor.

By the same token the idea of an earthly restoration of Jewry is also excluded, for Christ was not speaking of Jews in that great 17th of John but of the New Covenant mercies granted to His Church, of which the prophecies of Ezekiel were the overture.

THE GREAT BATTLE

What a playground for wild and unsanctified imagination have chapters 38 and 39 proved! No need to go to the apocalyptic cults of the U.S.A. - Jehovah's Witnesses, Armstrongites, and many others - to be racked with the horrors of a materialistic Armageddon. Evangelicalism has its own cupboard full of frightfulness to turn away attention from the true, sobering teaching that Armageddon is ever with us, Gog and Magog are a recurrent theme in the historic experience of Christ's people, and the battle lines of this vivid conflict are drawn unerringly, not across a map of Palestine, but in the heart of every believer who "wars not against flesh and blood".

Look not, brethren, for a ragged army of Russian conscripts cluttering up the Plain of Esdraelon eager to get at the Jews. Cast away those books of Jewish propaganda rolling out from evangelical presses, gathering money and support for sundry interests which derive much capital from sensational tales of horses and men, nuclear bombs and other forms of military frightfulness (what a pity Ezekiel did not include in his picture, rockets and aircraft, instead of out-of-date cavalry and spears and swords and bows!).

Eagerly do earthly minded authors and preachers (sure of an audience which delights to be fed on sensations and horrors) reach at every straw to support their theory. They read Russia in "Ross", (a word which does not occur in the A.V. where our translators give its true meaning, "chief" or "head"). They see Moscow in Mesech and Tobolsk in Tubal, despite the fact that every honest expositor exposes the fallacy

of building a theory on the mere sound of an ancient name, and Tobolsk anyway can by no means be a place of any significance.

Professor F.F. Bruce (whom we do not often quote) says, "The idea that (these names) have anything to do with Russia, Moscow and Tobolsk has no firmer foundation than a fortuitous resemblance between the consonantal groupings of each pair. Mesech and Tubal are the Moschi and Tibareni, known to the Assyrians as the Mushku and Tabalu who lived in the region of North Asia Minor where copper was mined, for they traded in this metal with the merchants of Tyre. (Ezekiel 27:13)". Gomer represents the Cimmerians whom the Assyrians knew as the Gimirrai. Togarmah is Armenia; Gog is an Anatolian personal name. Magog is a place-name from the same root.

But the Russian tale prevails, brethren, because it is convenient to use Russia as the chief enemy of religion, when all the time the foe is much nearer home. It is so much more convenient to place the event of Armageddon at some future date to be used as a goblin to frighten the impressionable, instead of warning them of their sin and curse and condemnation and guilt.

This utterly discreditable tale asks us literally to believe that the great battle (so soon over) is to be fought out between communists wearing bucklers and shields, and carrying bows and arrows and spears, with allies from Persia, Libya, Germany and what-not, all making common cause against a tiny Jewish army on a tiny battlefield along the banks of a trivial river known as the Kishon, by the waters of Megiddo (Judges 5:19). In one fell campaign, with their uncountable millions jostling each other on a field where not a hundredth part of them can even raise their weapons or see their insignificant foe and where nuclear bombs are out of the question (they would wipe out friend and foe together anyway) the enemy is destroyed supernaturally. What are people afraid of in such a war as this with its predicted end before scarcely a weapon is used?

The battle, we say, is soon over, but not the burying. The chosen people, victors in the mock battle, are turned into an army of gravediggers for seven months. None will be permitted to opt out of this distasteful task. "Yea, all the people of the land shall bury them...." (39:13). An unspecified period of time is allocated for men to spy out human remains wherever they may be found, and having discovered here and there a bone, to place a sign beside it until the buriers come and dispose of it by carrying it to the mass graves on the battlefield of Megiddo.

The very air is made foul by the sweltering corpses of the slain so that travelers will hold their noses (verse 11). Beasts and birds of prey will be summoned to gorge themselves on the carrion. The repast will be garnished with chariots as well as with the bodies of the charioteers (verse 20), and with fat bulls of Bashan as a final relish.

This dear reader is what the literalist thinks he sees in Ezekiel's entirely spiritual vision. In this he finds himself in the doubtful company of the real wild bulls of Bashan - those cults and sects mainly originating in the U.S.A. whose eschatological novelties command so high a market value in the publishing world.

THE REAL ENEMY

Let us recognize our real enemy. That enemy is not just the Communist goblin (whose potency for evil we would not for a moment minimize), but that root of evil from which all the darkness and violence now threatening law and order and civilization throughout the world, proceeds. We refer to that theological-scientific philosophy which on the one hand denies the supernaturalism and infallibility of the

Bible, and on the other sets of the throne of God that atheistic and materialistic conception of man and creation summarized in the theory of evolution.

A philosophy which has abandoned the supernatural origin of man and creation, the moral nature of the universe, and sees the only immortality in the perception of the race as a whole, as distinct from the individual, can retain no absolute standards of anything. Moral law has gone, and the only rule is that of expediency. This is the logical ground not only of communism but also of theological rationalism in the Christian Church. The extinction of political communism in some future nuclear war would no more dispose of our real problem than the breath of a babe would suffice to blow away a mountain mist.

In our western society we have all the materials of our own early destruction, even if Russia and China destroy themselves (as they seem likely to do) on the battlefield not of the Kishon, but of the Amur River.

Even as we write, our latest newspaper tells us in a dispatch from Washington, that the U.S. National Violence Commission, concluding an 18-month study of violence in America, advocates spending for domestic problems affecting law and order to take precedence over Defense as soon as the Vietnam War ends.

"We solemnly declare our conviction" the Commission says, 'that this nation is entering on a period in which our people need to be as concerned by the internal dangers to our free society as by any probable combination of external threats.'

The Commission says that violence in the U.S.A. has risen to alarming proportions. It estimates that 90 million firearms were in the hands of civilians in 1968. The danger of political assassination of heads of state is now so high that it recommends campaigning chiefly through television.

The reckless abandonment of all standards of decency throughout all the old Protestant areas of the world has put the whole of civilization at risk.

Ten years ago drug addiction in the Western world was almost non-existent. Today it is beyond the power of parliament or police to control. Ten years ago, the laws against indecency, obscenity and pornography were valid. Today the police can no longer bring a successful prosecution. Ten years ago human life still had a sacred value in the eyes of the great majority. Today it is being strangled by birth pills which will create more kinds of thrombosis than one, in human society. Violence against the person is getting out of hand. The police can offer no adequate protection. Sex is exploited in a manner unprecedented since the foundation of the world. In Britain we have a Chancellor of the Exchequer who declares (and actually believes what he says) that permissiveness is a mark of civilization, not degradation. Britain, one time bastion of truth and decency, of conservatism in thought and theology and morals, is racing faster than any other nation to shameful extinction in a sea of homosexuality, drink, drugs, irreligion, mockery of faith and truth, licentiousness, "sex", and barefaced indecency, abortion, pornography and violence.

Throughout the western world all accepted standards of art, music, painting, letters, poetry - are being trampled underfoot and supplanted by depraved works, distorted sounds, vile words, unmentionable scenes and practices, without precedent in history unless it was the days immediately before the Flood when

"Every imagination of the thoughts of men's hearts was only evil continually". (Genesis 6:5)

The New "Dark Age"

A new "Dark Age" is upon us. A British journalist, noted for his realistic approach to the state of modern society recently declared, "Never in my lifetime has the whole civilized world been so threatened by the forces of chaos and old night, risen like vampires from their graves. These forces seem sometimes literally satanic". (Peter Simple, Daily Telegraph, London)

The Reformation, that greatest purging influence in human society since Pentecost, a movement of the Spirit on the historic stage of event, which saved civilization, opened up the human mind, restored the Word of God to the world in full power, and prolonged man's days on the earth by more than four centuries, IS NOW OVER. The Reformation has been destroyed by rationalism (i.e., human reason enthroned in place of the Word of God). Russia had nothing to do with that. IT BEGAN NOT IN MUSCOVY BUT IN BRITAIN.

While Puritanism was still spreading its beneficent influences throughout our society, while America was still a virgin continent and the Pilgrim Fathers were carving out a heritage which was to bless the world for another two centuries, the Hume's and Hobbes were arising in Britain to sow the seed of humanism and remove faith, supplanting it with the doctrine of man's sufficiency to determine his own destiny. Presbyterianism became Unitarianism in England, as later on in the U.S.A. the old Independency was overtaken by the same fate. The heart of Protestantism in the two great English-speaking nations began to be eaten away by atheistic and deistic philosophy. Germany caught the contagion. Rationalism entered the continental universities, and exported its finished products to England and Scotland in the second half of the last century, to be met by our own brands of scientific delusion, the evolutionary theory of man's origin.

As the French revolution was founded on the philosophy of the deists (who admitted a universal Mind or Thought, but denies to it the throne of Personality) so the philosophy of Marx and Engels took hold of the materialism of the evolutionary theory (which could safely discard any further notion of a God, personal or otherwise, thanks to theological infidelity in the colleges and universities) and mould it into its dialectical and political form, so that it now stands ready to devour (if it can, subject to the overall providence and absolute sovereignty of that Eternal God whom both wings of modern unbelief agree to deny) its theological partner.

Not that Satan casts out Satan, but the subtlety of the Old Serpent, ever a deceiver, unites by his art two apparent opposites which combine to further his devices though on the human level they may appear to be mutually exclusive.

In short, communism and theological rationalism (with its denial of the Bible and of Christ), are but two wings of a great spiritual conspiracy lying at the back of the human race; a great engine of destruction devised by Infernal Powers in the realm of the Unseen, finally to destroy the divine image in man and pollute creation with the darkness and filth of a new Satanism.

LOOSING OF SATAN

Brethren, if there is a last phase of Satan's great Armageddon assault upon the dominion of Christ, this is it. If there is a losing of Satan to enable him to muster the forces of Gog and Magog from the four corners of the earth of compass about the camp of the saints, the last bastion of evangelical truth, our present situation looks uncommonly like it.

Away then with the puerile teachings so rife today in our evangelical camp, which deceive our people into thinking that Armageddon is a short, sharp battle fought against the Jews of a future age with bows and arrows, spears and horse-chariots. What is such a battle to us who all our life long have warred against a much more prodigious foe, whose battlements are in the dark invisibility of inward assault against our holiness and faith? How is it possible (except that we deal with a power which aims to deceive the very elect) for the evangelical church so long have supported the materialistic fallacy that the ministry of the prophets was of the earth, earthy, and permitted the devil to induce them to look for their enemy where he is not to be found, and relegate to the Jew of a future day, that desperate life and death conflict in which we are all engaged?

THE REFORMATION NOW DEFUNCT

Brethren, THE LAST BATTLE IS NOW ON. We look not for any resuscitation of the now defunct Reformation. In the nature of things such a spiritual earthquake could happen only once in history. There is no sign on the horizon of any gleam of that 'revival' so confidently predicted and worked for, and worked-up by good people (or otherwise) who have made a trade of revivalism till the very name stinks to high heaven.

In our own time we have witnessed the last throw of evangelical Arminianism which sincerely believes that we have it is our own power to bring about a revival by simply putting into operation the imaginary laws said to govern the case. God can do nothing (we have been told) without our initiative. At last we have seen, in the last decade, the utmost man can do to save the world and cram heaven with a converted population - all in vain.

Money has been obtained and spent on a vaster scale than ever before. Enormous campaigns have been laid on at a cost of half million sterling at a time. Everything has been exploited to bring success. Personality culture and 'presentation' have been brought to the highest commercial pitch. The focus has been upon man - one man in particular. Music has been geared to the effort, with high-powered vocalists and choir leaders. The harvest of decisions has been provided for in advance, by the most amazing techniques of crowd handling. The results?

In a few short years since the last great effort, a well-established evangelical journal, "The Christian" of London, taken over by the B.G. Evangelistic Trust, has been run into the ground, a complete financial failure. It could not maintain its own existence despite the fact that it had a potential readership of a hundred thousand 'converts' and supporters.

The converts have for the most part vanished into thin air. We do not question the sincerity of our Arminian friends in their colossal effort, but it is obvious to people still with the capacity for independent thinking, that we have witnessed in our time a complete exposure of the fallacy that any effort of man can redeem the present situation. The "free-will" and enterprise of men cannot achieve a wider area of redemption than can be safely left to the sovereign and electing grace of an Omnipotent God, who gave His Only Begotten Son to die, and who made provision that He should not die in vain. His obedience unto death, even the death of the cross ensures the salvation, by eternal covenant, of "those whom the Father gave Him" (John 17:2) even before the foundation of the world.

ARMAGEDDON FOUGHT IN HEAVEN AND EARTH

We return to our Ezekiel and his spiritual ministry.

His chapters on the campaign of Gog and Magog against the people of the Lord are set in a theatre of heaven and earth vaster beyond all comparison than that tiny field in Palestine where Deborah and Barak gloriously triumphed over the heathen host of Jabin and Sisera.

John, in Revelation 20, draws upon his Ezekiel for his presentation of the last great conflict between light and darkness. He gathers his Magogian host, not from Russia, nor yet from China, but from "the four quarters of the earth", and in this he shows the meaning of Ezekiel's vision, for Ezekiel also assembles Gog's multitude from the four major points of the compass: Mesech and Tubal lie to the North (of Palestine), Persia to the East, Ethiopia to the South, and Libya to the West (see Ezekiel 38:5).

The North, in the Old Testament, means those enemies from the Assyrian and Babylonian regions whose only access to Palestine lay along the river communications of the Euphrates and a descent upon Palestine from the North.

The limited area in the Middle East from which Ezekiel assembles his multitude is enlarged by John in Revelation 20 to include all the nations of the world, thus proving that Ezekiel is not to be literally understood. What was localized in his day to the standard geography of the times then present, is enlarged by John, who deals more specifically with the world-wide extent of the Kingdom of Redemption, to cover the face of the entire globe. It is thus that prophecy competes prophecy.

The Gog and Magog of both prophecies (Ezekiel and Revelation) represent an uprising of heathen power against the people of God, on a scale unprecedented, to which the original battle of Megiddo in the days of Deborah (and later of King Josiah who perished on the same field in conflict with the Egyptian army advancing to battle with the Chaldeans at Carchemish - see 2 Chron. 35:22) - bore only a token resemblance.

The identity of Gog, the chief prince of Mesech and Tubal (Ezekiel 38:2) need not cause us any difficulty. We need look no further than the chief prince of hell, that old serpent, the devil and Satan, who neatly fills the role in John's account in Revelation 20.

THE LAST PHASE OF THE BATTLE

When is the battle fought?

It is always on. The assault of the heathenish spirit to deceive the nations and to destroy the Church of Christ is seen in the surging of error amongst the nations, the corruption of doctrine, the denial of the Word of God, the re-establishment of ancient error in Christian form (as in Rome) and of atheism and human sufficiency in the one-time protestant temple.

Deeper yet, it is felt constantly in the power of temptation, and the polluting spirit of evil. No-one is immune. All are involved.

If there is a final phase of this universal war, it is surely on now, and our evangelical friends are exhorted to give heed.

The Reformed doctrines of faith and grace are our distinctive testimony and witness to Christ, our great and glorious Emmanuel, the Author and Finisher of our Faith, the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, for whom, in this last great conflict, we must fight and endure, suffer shame and fearlessly withstand by faith, the inward and outward assaults of Satan.

The future could well hold for us persecution and martyrdom. Already a minister of the gospel who attempts to re-establish a Reformed ministry of the Word holds his ministerial life in his hands (because evangelicalism has not yet learned its lesson). Our Bible colleges are failing to turn out men who know where they are going or how to exercise an effective ministry. There are few to direct our young men, or put in to their hands the means of real and profound study, seeing most of their teachers are in similar plight themselves.

Congregations are dwindling. Money is inflated and devalued. Soon it will be difficult to support a full-time ministry. The evangelical church seems to be set on the road back to a coventicle age, with those who love Christ and His word meeting privately in places of convenience to obtain the heavenly manna.

These are serious times. Most of us have not had to suffer scorn and trial for Christ's trice-blessed name - not yet- but the day is coming....

CHRIST'S KINGDOM INDESTRUCTIBLE

It is thus we interpret Ezekiel's vision. Instead of the dry bones of literalism, we see the world-wide conflict between the forces of the Lamb and those of the Dragon- in age upon age succeeding; the conflicts of the N.T. Church in the days of the apostles; its wrestling with error in the days of the Fathers; the fresh triumph of the truth in the days of Augustine; the long reign of antichrist during the thousand years of Rome's revived heathenism (during which God's witnesses clothed in sackcloth maintained the evangelical light in a hostile world); the conflicts and the wrestling of the era of Reform; the confessional struggle of Puritans and Covenanters; the noble inroads into Satan's empire in the first days of missionary expansions; and now, in an age when the world is rushing on to judgment and Satan is loosed --- in all this we perceive the same age long conflict. And this is Gog and Magog, and these are the lessons:

1. The Indestructible Nature of the Kingdom of Christ, which always overcomes by the faith of its children and their testimony: they overcome the Dragon by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony. (Revelation 12:11)
2. The people of God may not look for respite from conflict in this world. They, and they only, as the Kingdom of Christ on earth, are the perpetual target of Satan - for they war not against flesh and blood, but against powers of wickedness in the invisible realm.
3. Their victory over Satan's kingdom is not only assured, but complete and final. This is what is figured in Ezekiel's vision, in the recurrence of the number seven - seven years burning the weapons of war left by God's shivered host and seven months burying the dead in the mass grave (39:9, 12). The people of God always in the end bury their enemies who come to bury THEM. The representation of the burying and the burning over so long a period (dignified by the use of the figure, denoting prophetic perfection) indicates the finality and completeness of the triumph; the stench from the mass grave shows how contemptible are the boasts of the wicked; the call to birds and beasts to feast themselves on the slain (who are already buried anyway!) is a common Old Testament figure to indicate the thoroughness of victory.

"This day", said David to Goliath, "I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know there is a God in Israel". (1 Samuel 17:46) Ezekiel was quoting David, the great example of Christ's triumph over his foes, not with sword or spear, but by the Word. Is this not better than the literal stench, grave digging, burning and signposting required by the theory of prophecy against which we contend?

THE TOCSIN OF SPIRITUAL WAR

We conclude with an extract from our writings first published a few years ago but germane to our situation today.

We do not expect another Reformation. What we look for is a testimony. We do not anticipate another worldwide triumph of the Word in human society, transforming Parliament and University, Church and College. The world has gone too far down the road to judgment for that. What we look for and pray for, and expect, is that the Word of God will be heard, like the word of righteous Noah in a world of violence plunging madly on to universal judgment, warning the people that there is a God who has spoken, a Law which is imperishable, a judgment which is certain and imminent, and a sovereign mercy for all who humbly repent and believe. That is not so easy as it sounds. We have Bible Colleges which do not teach the Bible, students and administrators who cannot preach, and people who are unaccustomed and disinclined to the hearing of the Word in its strength and fullness.

We have an evangelical community fed on a diluted gospel, or lulled to sleep with a soft devotionalism, wafted nowhere in particular by an increasingly sentimentalized hymnology, incapable of the robust praise and worship reflected in the Psalms of David.

We have a theology which has taken the initiative from God and placed it in the hands of men, and a conception of Christ as sitting on the eternal throne but not having begun yet to reign.

At present any man who sets about reforming his ministry and setting it up again on a solid, expository basis, is placing his whole future at risk. Yet anything less is a barrier of straw against the revival of Rome and the landslide of infidelity.

But the Tin God of Evolution is up and the God of the Bible is down. The Major Generals of hell have moved in, and the Reformation is a carcass. Earl Beelzebub, feudal lord of Sodom and Gomorrah is in supreme command. His Foulness the Duke of Lechery and Lies is his chief of staff. His Ancient Filthiness, Lord Sewer, carries the portfolio of pornography and obscenity, and the Right Dishonorable the Member for the Rotten Boroughs of Vice and Violence is in charge of public behavior. These have moved in to occupy and dominate Press and Parliament, University and College, bookstall and T.V. screen, to direct the mind of the nation, to stifle conscience and suppress truth, to open the sluice gates of ancient dirt for the defilement of youth, to banish God and truth and reason, and turn us all into evolutionary animals - and not very clean or elevated animals at that.

Well might Christ's true, evangelical Church say with Samuel Rutherford when religion was being trampled underfoot by ecclesiastical and political tyranny in the 17th century in Scotland:

I have borne scorn and hatred,

I have borne wrong and shame;

Earth's proud ones have reproached me

For Christ's thrice blessed name:

Where God His seal set fairest

They've stamped t

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