THE RESTORATION AND CONVERSION OF THE JEWS

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"1 The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, 2 and caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. 3 And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live! And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest. 4 Again he said unto me, Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. 5 Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: 6 and I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD. 7 So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. 8 And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them. 9 Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. 10 So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army" (Ezekiel 37:1-10).

This vision has been used, from the time of Jerome onwards, as a description of the resurrection, and certainly it may be so accommodated with much effect. What a vision of the great day the words picture before the mind's eye! The great army of the quick, who once were dead, seem to start up as we read. Here, too, we have a very fit and appropriate question to be asked in a charnel-house [a vault of dead bodies], "Son of man, can these bones live?" Looking down into the dark grave, or watching the sexton as he throws up the mouldering relics, once instinct with life, well may unbelief suggest the enquiry– "Can these bones live?" Faith cannot at all times give a more satisfactory answer than this– "O Lord GOD, thou knowest." But while this interpretation of the vision may be very proper as an accommodation, it must be quite evident to any thinking person that this is not the meaning of the passage. There is no allusion made by Ezekiel to the resurrection, and such topic would have been quite apart from the design of the prophet's speech. I believe he was no more thinking of the resurrection of the dead than of the building of St. Peter's at Rome, or the emigration of the Pilgrim Fathers. That topic is altogether foreign to the subject in hand, and could not by any possibility have crept into the prophet's mind. He was talking about the people of Israel, and prophesying concerning them; and evidently the vision, according to God's own interpretation of it, was concerning them, and them alone, for "these bones are the whole house of Israel." It was not a

vision concerning all men, nor, indeed, concerning any men as to the resurrection of the dead, but it had a direct and special bearing upon the Jewish people.

This passage, again, has been very frequently, and I dare say very properly, used to describe the revival of a decayed Church. This vision may be looked upon as descriptive of a state of lukewarmness and spiritual lethargy in a Church, when the question may be sorrowfully asked– "Can these bones live?" Can that dull minister wake up to living power? Can these cold deacons glow with holy heat? Can those unspiritual members rise to something like holy earnest selfsacrifice? Is it possible that the drowsy formal Church should start up to real earnestness? Such suggestions might well have occurred to many minds at the time of the Reformation. It did seem impossible, when Popery was in its power, that spiritual life should ever again return to the Church. Piety seemed to be dead and buried, and the cloister, the clergy, superstition and deceit, like great graves, had swallowed up everything that was good; but the Lord appeared for his people, and brought up the buried truth out of its grave, and once more in every part of the known world the name of Jesus Christ was lifted up, and sound doctrine was preached. So was it in our own country. When both the Establishment and Dissent had fallen into spiritual death, we might well have said– " Can these bones live?" But Whitfield and Wesley were raised up by God, and they prophesied upon the dry bones, and up they stood, filled with the Spirit of God, "an exceeding great army." Let the crowds of Kingsdown, and the multitudes on Kennington Common, tell of the quickening power of Jesus' name. Decayed Churches can most certainly be revived by the preaching of the Word, accompanied by the coming of the heavenly "breath" from the four winds. O Lord, send us such revivals now, for many of thy Churches need them: they are almost as dead as the corpses which sleep around them in the graveyard. But while we admit this to be a very fitting accommodation of our text, yet we are quite convinced that it is not to this that the passage refers. It would be altogether alien to the prophet's train of thought to be thinking about the restoration of fallen zeal and the rekindling of expiring love; he was not considering the Reformation either of Luther or of Whitfield, or about the revival of one Church or of another. No, he was talking of his own people, of his own race, and of his own tribe. He surely ought to have known his own mind, and led by the Holy Spirit he gives us as an explanation of the vision, not– "Thus saith the Lord, my dying Church shall be restored," but–" I will bring my people out of their graves, and bring them into the land of Israel."

With very great propriety, too, this passage has been used for the comforting of believers in their dark and cloudy days. When they have lost their comforts, when their spiritual joys have drooped like withering flowers, when they have been no longer able to

"Read their titles clear
To mansions in the skies,"

they have been reminded that God could return to them in grace and mercy, that the dry bones could live, and should live; that the Spirit of God could again come upon his people; that even at the time when they were ready to give up all hope and lie down in despair, he could come and so quicken them, that the poor trembling cowards should be turned into soldiers of God, and should stand upon their feet an exceeding great army. No grave of grief can hold the immortal joy of a believer: on the third day it shall rise again, for, like the Lord who gave it, it shall never see corruption. Bone to his bone shall your comforts come together, and an army of joys shall live in your soul. The passage certainly may be so used without violent wresting, and might thus yield much comfort to the people of God; but still we take the liberty of saying that this is not the drift of the prophet, and

that we do not believe he was thinking of anything of the kind, but that he was speaking only of his own people, his own "kinsmen according to the flesh."

Once more. There is no doubt that we have in this passage a most striking picture of the restoration of dead souls to spiritual life. Men, by nature, are just like these dry bones exposed in the open valley. The whole spiritual frame is dislocated; the sap and marrow of spiritual life has been dried out of manhood. Human nature is not only dead, but, like the bleaching bones which have long whitened in the sun, it has lost all trace of the divine life. Will and power have both departed. Spiritual death reigns undisturbed. Yet the dry bones can live. Under the preaching of the Word the vilest sinners can be reclaimed, the most stubborn wills can be subdued, the most unholy lives can be sanctified. When the holy "breath" comes from the four winds, when the divine Spirit descends to own the Word, then multitudes of sinners, as on Pentecost's hallowed day, stand up upon their feet, an exceeding great army, to praise the Lord their God. But, mark you, this is not the first and proper interpretation of the text; it is indeed nothing more than a very striking parallel case to the one before us. It is not the case itself; it is only a similar one, for the way in which God restores a nation is, practically, the way in which he restores an individual. The way in which Israel shall be saved is the same by which any one individual sinner shall be saved. It is not, however, the one case which the prophet is aiming at; he is looking at the vast mass of cases, the multitudes of instances to be found among the Jewish people, of gracious quickening, and holy resurrection. His first and primary intention was to speak of them, and though it is right and lawful to take a passage in its widest possible meaning, since "no Scripture is of private interpretation," yet I hold it to be treason to God's Word to neglect its primary meaning, and constantly to say– "Such-and-such is the primary meaning, but it is of no consequence, and I shall use the words for another object." The preacher of God's truth should not give up the Holy Ghost's meaning; he should take care that he does not even put it in the back ground. The first meaning of a text, the Spirit's meaning, is that which should be brought out first, and though the rest may fairly spring out of it, yet the first sense should have the chief place. Let it have the uppermost place in the synagogue, let it be looked upon as at least not inferior, either in interest or importance, to any other meaning which may come out of the text.

The meaning of our text, as opened up by the context, is most evidently, if words mean anything, first, that there shall be a political restoration of the Jews to their own land and to their own nationality; and then, secondly, there is in the text, and in the context, a most plain declaration, that there shall be a spiritual restoration, a conversion in fact, of the tribes of Israel.

I. THERE IS TO BE A POLITICAL RESTORATION OF THE JEWS.

Israel is now blotted out from the map of nations; her sons are scattered far and wide; her daughters mourn beside all the rivers of the earth. Her sacred song is hushed; no king reigns in Jerusalem; she bringeth forth no governors among her tribes. But she is to be restored; she is to be restored "as from the dead." When her own sons have given up all hope of her, then is God to appear for her. She is to be reorganized; her scattered bones are to be brought together. There will be a native government again; there will again be the form of a body politic; a state shall be incorporated, and a king shall reign. Israel has now become alienated from her own land. Her sons, though they can never forget the sacred dust of Palestine, yet die at a hopeless distance from her consecrated shores. But it shall not be so forever, for her sons shall again rejoice in her: her land shall

be called Beulah, for as a young man marrieth a virgin so shall her sons marry her. "I will place you in your own land," is God's promise to them. They shall again walk upon her mountains, shall once more sit under her vines and rejoice under her fig-trees. And they are also to be re-united. There shall not be two, nor ten, nor twelve, but one–one Israel praising one God, serving one king, and that one king the Son of David, the descended Messiah. They are to have a national prosperity which shall make them famous; nay, so glorious shall they be that Egypt, and Tyre, and Greece, and Rome, shall all forget their glory in the greater splendor of the throne of David. The day shall yet come when all the high hills shall leap with envy, because this is the hill which God hath chosen, when Zion's shrine shall again be visited by the constant feet of the pilgrim; when her valleys shall echo with songs, and her hill-tops shall drop with wine and oil. If there be meaning in words this must be the meaning of this chapter. I wish never to learn the art of tearing God's meaning out of his own words. If there be anything clear and plain, the literal sense and meaning of this passage–a meaning not to be spirited or spiritualized away–must be evident that both the two and the ten tribes of Israel are to be restored to their own land, and that a king is to rule over them. "Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all; and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all" [Ezekiel 37:21-22].

I am not now going into millennial theories, or into any speculation as to dates. I do not know anything at all about such things, and I am not sure that I am called to spend my time in such researches. I am rather called to minister the gospel than to open prophecy. Those who are wise in such things doubtless prize their wisdom, but I have not the time to acquire it, nor any inclination to leave soul-winning pursuits for less arousing themes. I believe it is a great deal better to leave many of these promises, and many of these gracious out-looks of believers, to exercise their full force upon our minds, without depriving them of their simple glory by aiming to discover dates and figures. Let this be settled, however, that if there be meaning in words, Israel is yet to be restored.

> *"Yet not in vain–o'er Israel's land*
> *The glory yet will shine;*
> *And he, thy once rejected King,*
> *Messiah, shall be thine.*
>
> *His chosen Bride, ordain'd with him*
> *To reign o'er all the earth,*
> *Shall first be framed, are thou shalt know*
> *Thy Savior's matchless worth.*
>
> *Then thou, beneath the peaceful reign*
> *Of Jesus and his Bride,*
> *Shalt sound his grace and glory forth,*
> *To all the earth beside.*
>
> *The nations to thy glorious light,*
> *O Zion, yet shall throng,*
> *And all the list'ning islands wait*
> *To catch the joyful song."*

But there is a second meaning here.

II. ISRAEL IS TO HAVE A SPIRITUAL RESTORATIONOR A CONVERSION.

Both the text and the context teach this. The promise is that they shall renounce their idols, and, behold, they have already done so. "Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols." Whatever faults the Jew may have besides, he certainly has no idolatry. "The Lord thy God is one God," is a truth far better conceived by the Jew than by any other man on earth except the Christian. Weaned for ever from the worship of all images, of whatever sort, the Jewish nation has now become infatuated with traditions or

duped by philosophy. She is to have, however, instead of these delusions, a spiritual religion: she is to love her God. "They shall be my people, and I will be their God." The unseen but omnipotent Jehovah is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth by his ancient people; they are to come before him in his own appointed way, accepting the Mediator whom their sires rejected; coming into covenant relation with God, for so our text tells us– "I will make a covenant of peace with them," and Jesus is our peace, therefore we gather that Jehovah shall enter into the covenant of grace with them, that covenant of which Christ is the federal head, the substance, and the surety. They are to walk in God's ordinances and statutes, and so exhibit the practical effects of being united to Christ who hath given them peace. All these promises certainly imply that the people of Israel are to be converted to God, and that this conversion is to be permanent, for the tabernacle of God is to be with them, the Most High is, in an especial manner, to have his sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore; so that whatever nations may apostatize and turn from the Lord in these latter days, the nation of Israel never can, for she shall be effectually and permanently converted, the hearts of the fathers shall be turned with the hearts of the children unto the Lord their God, and they shall be the people of God, world without end.

We look forward, then, for these two things. I am not going to theorize upon which of them will come first, whether they shall be restored first, and converted afterwards, or converted first, and then restored. They are to be restored, and they are to be converted too. Let the Lord send these blessings in his own order, and we shall be well content whichever way they shall come. We take this for our joy and our comfort, that this thing shall be, and that both in the spiritual and in the temporal throne, the King Messiah shall sit, and reign among his people gloriously.

Now I come to the practical part of my sermon this evening:

III. THE MEANS OF THAT RESTORATION.

Looking at this matter, we are very apt to say, "How can these things be? How can the Jews he converted to Christ? How can they be made into a nation? Truly, the case is quite as hopeless as that of the bones in the valley! How shall they cease from worldliness, or renounce their constant pursuit of riches? How shall they be weaned from their bigoted attachment to their Talmudic traditions? How shall they be lifted up out of that hardness of heart, which makes them hate the Messiah of Nazareth, their Lord and King? How can these things be?" The prophet does not say it cannot be; his unbelief is not so great as that, but at the same time, he scarcely ventures to think that it can ever be possible. He very wisely, however, puts back the question upon his God– "O Lord GOD, thou knowest." Now some of you are very sanguine about this to-night, and you are expecting to see the Jews converted very soon, perhaps in a month or two. I wish you may see it as soon as your desires would date it. Others of us are not very sanguine, but take a more gloomy view of a long future of woes. Well, let us both together come before God to-night, and say, "O Lord GOD, thou knowest; and if thou knowest it, Lord, we will be content to leave the secret with thee; only tell us what thou wouldst have us to do; we ask not food for speculation, but we do ask for work; we ask for something by which we may practically show that we really do love the Jew, and that we would bring him to Christ." In answer to this, the Lord says to his servants, "Prophesy upon these bones," so that our duty to-night, as Christians, is to prophesy upon these bones, and we shall then see God's purpose fulfilled, when we obey God's precept.

I want you to observe that there are two kinds of prophesying spoken of here. First, the prophet prophesies to the bones–here is preaching; and next, he prophesies to the four winds–here is praying. The preaching has its share in the work, but it is the praying which achieves the result, for after he had prophesied to the four winds, and not before, the bones began to live. All that the preaching did was to make a stir, and to bring the bones together, but it was the praying which did the work, for then God the Holy Ghost came to give them life.

Preaching and praying, then, are the two heads of this part of my sermon to-night, and we will speak upon each briefly.

1. It is the duty and the privilege of the Christian Church, to preach the gospel to the Jew, and to every creature, and in so doing she may safely take the vision before us as her guide.

She may take it as her guide, first, as to matter. What are we to preach? The text says we are to prophesy, and assuredly every missionary to the Jews should especially keep God's prophecies very prominently before the public eye. It seems to me that one way in which the Jewish mind might be laid hold of, would be to remind the Jews right often of that splendid future which both the Old and the New Testaments predict for Israel. Every man has a tender side and a warm heart towards his own nation, and if you tell him that in your standard book there is a revelation made that that nation is to act a grand part in human history, and is, indeed, to take the very highest place in the parliament of nations, then the man's prejudice is on your side, and he listens to you with the greater attention. I would not commend, as some do, the everlasting preaching of prophesy in every congregation, but a greater prominence should be given to prophecies in teaching the Jews than among any other people.

But still, the main thing which we have to preach about is Christ. Depend upon it, dear brethren, the best sermons which we ever preach are those which are fullest of Christ Jesus the Son of David and the Son of God; Jesus the suffering Savior by whose stripes we are healed; Jesus able to save unto the uttermost–here is the most suitable subject for Gentiles, and God has fashioned all hearts alike, and therefore, this is also the noblest theme for Jews. Paul loved his countrymen; he was no simpleton; he knew what was the best weapon with which to assail and overcome their prejudices, and yet he could say, "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." Lift up the Messiah, then, both before Jew and Gentile. Tell of Mary's Son, the eternal Son of God, the Man of Nazareth, who is none other than the incarnate Word, God made flesh, and dwelling amongst us. Preach his hallowed life–the righteousness of his people; declare his painful death–the putting away of all their sins. Vindicate his glorious resurrection, the justification of his people; tell of his ascent on high, their triumph over the world and sin; declare his second advent, his glorious coming, to make his people glorious in the glory which he hath won for them, and Christ Jesus, as he is thus preached, shall surely be the means of making these bones live. Let this preaching resound with sovereign mercy; let it always have in it the clear and distinct ring of free grace. I was thinking as I read this chapter just now, that of all the sermons which were ever preached, this sermon to the dry bones is the most Calvinistic, the most full of free grace, of any which were ever delivered. If you will notice it you will find that there is not an "if," or a "but," or a condition in it; and as for free-will, there is not even a mention of it. It is all in this fashion– " Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live; and I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put

breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord." You see it is all "shalls," and "wills," and covenant purposes. It is all God's decrees declared, and declared, too, as if there were no possibility of man's resisting them. He does not say, "You dry bones, you shall live if you like, you shall if you are willing." He doth not say to them, "You shall stand upright and be an exceeding great army if it pleases you to consent to my power." No, but it is, "I will," and "you shall." As for will, it is altogether put out of the question, for how shall the dead have a will in the matter? And so, dear friends, I would have the gospel preached both to the Jew and the Gentile with a very clear and distinct note of free, sovereign, almighty grace. Man has a will, and God never ignores that will, but by his almighty grace he blessedly leads it in silken fetters. He never stops to ask that will's consent when he comes forth upon his errands of effectual grace, but he wins that consent by the sweet persuasions of his own omnipotent love. He comes arrayed in the robes of his omnipotent grace, and the most hardened of rebels see at once such an attractive force in the love of God in Christ, that with full consent against their ancient wills they yield themselves captives to the grace of God. I do not believe that the Jews, or anybody else, will ever be converted, as a usual thing, by keeping back any of the doctrines of grace. We must have God's truth, and the whole of it; and more distinct utterances concerning evangelical doctrines and the grace of God are required both for Jews and for Gentiles. Preach, preach, preach, then, but let it be the preaching of Christ, and the proclamation of free grace. The Church, I say, has a model here as to the matter of preaching.

And I am certain that she has also a model here as to her manner of preaching. How shall we preach the gospel? Was Ezekiel to do what some of my hyper-Calvinistic brethren say preachers ought to do–to warn the sinner, but never to invite him? Was Ezekiel to go and talk to these bones, but never to say a word to them by way of command? Was he to explain the way of salvation, but never bid them walk in it? No; after he had declared covenant purposes, he was then to say, "Thus saith the Lord, ye dry bones live." And so the message of the gospel minister when he has declared the purposes of divine grace, is to say to sinners, "Thus saith the Lord, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; trust Christ, and you are saved." Whoever you may be, Jew or Gentile, whether your speech be that of the land of Canaan or of a Gentile tongue, whether you spring of Shem, Ham, or Japheth, trust Christ, and you are saved; trust him, then, ye dry bones, and live. Withered arm, be outstretched; lame men, leap; blind eyes, see; ye dead, dry bones, live. The manner of our preaching is to be by way of command, as well as by way of teaching. Repent and be converted, every one of you. Lay hold on eternal life. "Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

We have a model here, moreover, as to our audience. We are not to select our congregation, but we are to go where God sends us; and if he should send us into the open valley, where the bones are very dry, we are to preach there. I trust that my brethren of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Jews will never confine their labors to the good Jew, the respectable Jew, the enlightened Jew–let them seek after him among the rest–but I hope they will also seek after the ignorant, the degraded, the poor, and the fallen. The Church's best harvests have generally been reaped among the poor. For every grain of wheat which has fructified upon the hill-sides of wealth, thousands have sprung up to bring forth much fruit in the valleys of poverty and obscurity. "The poor have the gospel preached to them"–this is the gospel's pride; the poor receive the gospel–this is its success. Preach to the dry bones, then. Do not say,

"Such-and-such a man is too bigoted;" the case rests not with him, nor with his bigotry, but with God. These bones were very dry, but yet they lived. There is very little to choose after all, between one man and another, when all are dead; a little difference in the dryness does not come to much account when all are dead in sin. That some men are drunken and some are sober, that some men are debauched and some are chaste, makes a very great difference in the moral and civil world, but a very little difference indeed in the spiritual world, for there the same things happen to them both. If they believe not they shall alike be lost, and if they trust Jesus Christ they shall alike be saved. Let not, therefore, the greater viciousness of a people, or their greater hardness of heart, ever stand in our way, but let us say to them, dry as they are, "Ye dry bones, live."

And here, again, we have another lesson as to the preacher's authority. If you will observe, you will see the prophet says, "Hear the Word of the Lord." We are to go neither to Jew nor to Gentile upon our own errand, or bearing our own words. I have no right to command a man to believe this or that, except I be an ambassador of God, and then, with God's authority to direct and empower me, I speak no longer as a man following his own wit, but as the mouth of God. So let every one of us go, when we are trying to save souls, feeling the hand of God upon us, with a soul big with anxious thoughts and heaving high with earnest desires: let us speak

"As though we ne'er might speak again,
As dying men to dying men,"

taking hold upon God's arm, and beseeching him to work by us and through us for the good of men. Remember, Christian, however humble you may be, when you speak God's Word, that Word has an authority about it which will leave a man without excuse if he rejects it. Always put to your fellow-man the truth which you hold dear, not as a thing which he may play with or may do what he likes with, which is at his option to choose or to neglect as he sees fit; but put it to him as it is in truth, the Word of God; and be not satisfied unless you warn him that it is at his own peril that he rejects the invitation, and that on his own head must be his blood if he turns aside from the good word of the command of God.

Thus, then, we have, I think, all the directions which are necessary for us to preach; and what this Society, and every other Society which aims at the conversion of sinners has to do, is to go and preach, preach, preach, not spending too much upon printing, nor upon schools, nor ecclesiastical buildings, but preaching the Word; for after all, this is the battering-ram which is to shake the gates of hell and break its iron bars. God has chosen "the foolishness of preaching" that he might by it save those who believe. Preaching is the blast of the ram's horn ordained to level Jericho, and the sound of the silver trumpet appointed to usher in the jubilee. It is God's chariot of fire for bearing souls to heaven, and his two-edged sword to smite the hosts of hell. His ordained servants are at once warriors and builders, and the Word serves them both for spear and trowel. Preach, then, from morning till night, at every time, and on all occasions, "the unsearchable riches of Christ," and Israel shall yet live. I cannot leave this point without noticing how the prophet describes the effect of his preaching–there was a voice, and there was a noise. Was this the noise of God's voice going with man's voice? or was this the noise of the bones themselves creeping one over another? Does this represent opposition on the part of those preached to? Truly opposition is always a good sign. When you can get a man to oppose you, you may have some hope of him. If he has enough religious thought to try and refute what you bring before him, you may be thankful. Is this stir, then, the stir of opposition, or is it the stir of enquiry? Does not the creeping of the bones together represent the people coming together to hear,

to talk with one another, to reason about divine things? When the various muscles, and the flesh come upon the bones, does this represent the appearance of certain converts, destined to be the leaders of others? Are these sinews and muscles the representatives of men who are to move the rest of the body corporate by-and-by? It may be so, and we may expect to see as Christ is preached among Jews or Gentiles, more and more stir and excitement–the people coming together in greater numbers, and the whole mass fermenting by the force of the leaven. Anything is better than stagnation: of a persecutor I have quite as much hope as of a quiet despiser.

2. But now we come to speak of that in which you can all take a part. Perhaps you cannot take a part in preaching the Word, though I would that ye all could; and I covet for you all the best gifts; but in the second form of prophesying you can all take your share. After the prophet had prophesied to the bones, he was to prophesy to the winds. He was to say to the blessed Spirit, the Life-giver, the God of all grace, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." Preaching alone doth little; it may make the stir, it may bring the people together. There is an attractiveness about the gospel which will draw the people to hear it; and there is, moreover, a force about it which will excite them, for it is "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword;" but there is no life-giving power in the gospel of itself apart from the Holy Spirit. The "breath" must first blow, and then these bones shall live. Let us betake ourselves much to this form of prophesying. Brethren and sisters in Christ, you who care for Israel, go before the Lord now and henceforth, in earnest, importunate prayer. Strive to feel more than ever conscious of the utter indispensability of this matter. Feel that without Christ you can do nothing. In vain your society, your machinery, your committee, your secretaries, your collectors, your contributors, your missionaries, without the Holy Spirit. Blow ye your trumpet, and tell out loudly what you have done; ye have sown much, but ye shall reap little unless ye are trusting in the Spirit of God. There is always this danger to which we are exposed, though some, I know, think that it is a danger which does not exist–I mean the peril of looking to the strength or the weakness of the instrumentality, and being either puffed up by the one or dejected by the other. You are enough for your work if God be with you; and if you be but a handful you are too many for your work if God be not with you. God never objecteth to human weakness, when he comes to work he prefers it, for it makes a platform for divine power. What did he say to Gideon– " The people are too many for me;" he did not say that they were too few. You never find a case in Scripture, of God's saying that the people were too few, but it was, "The people are too many for me." Man's strength is more in God's way than man's weakness. Nay, human weakness, inasmuch as it makes elbow-room for God's strength, is God's chosen instrument. "Therefore will I glory in infirmities," said the apostle, "that the power of God may rest upon me" [II Cor12:9]. Rest then, upon the Holy Spirit as indispensable, and go to God with this for your cry, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live."

Observe, beloved, that this second prophesying of Ezekiel is just as bold and as full of faith as the first. He seems to have no doubt, but speaks as though he could command the wind. "Come," saith he, and the wind cometh. We want more faith in God. When we are engaged in any spiritual work we shall always find our success proportioned to our faith. Little faith, slender harvests; much faith, plenteous sheaves. Little fishes come in slender numbers to Little-faith's net; but strong confidence can hardly hold all the great fishes which load her boat. I will not ask for your society, or for you any further boon than greater faith, for, getting greater

faith you have divine strength and sure success. The Spirit always works with faithful men. My dear friends, the Spirit of God is poured out. He abideth in his Church as the ever present Comforter. We are not to look upon his influences as a boon which we cannot reach, for he is here waiting to give us all we need. He dwells in the midst of his people, and we have but to cry unto him, and he will manifest his mighty power, and we shall have souls saved, both Jews and Gentiles. Let your prayer then, be with a sense of how much you need it, but yet with a firm conviction that the Holy Spirit will most surely come in answer to your prayers. And, then, let it be earnest prayer. That "Come from the four winds, O breath," reads to me like the cry, not of one in despair, but of one who is full of a vehement desire, gratified with what he sees, since the bones have come together, and have been mysteriously clothed with flesh, but now crying passionately for the immediate completion of the miracle– "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." Here is continual vehemence and force here; here is just that which makes a prayer prevalent. O, let us cry mightily unto God! We cannot expect to see great things unless we do cry to him, but we are only limited by our prayers. We are not straitened in him; we are only straitened in ourselves. We might see greater things if we could but believe. All things are possible to him that believeth, but as of old, the Lord Jesus cannot do many mighty things now-a-days, because of our unbelief. We hamper the arm of grace; we do, as it were, restrain the Almighty energy. O for greater faith, to believe that nations may be born in a day, that multitudes may be turned unto God at once, and we shall yet see it–see what our fathers never saw, and what our imaginations have never dreamed. We shall leap from victory to victory, marching on from one triumph to another, until we meet the all-glorious Savior. Charging foeman after foeman, and routing army after army, we shall go on, conquering and to conquer, until we salute him who cometh upon the white horse of triumph, followed by all the armies of heaven, Brethren, be of good courage in your work of faith and labor of love, for it is not, and shall not be in vain in the Lord.

I address some to-night, I know, who have no interest in what I have been saying, for they are not subjects of Messiah themselves. Remember, faith is a sign of your allegiance to him. Trust Christ, and you are saved. Trust Jesus Christ, and you are delivered from divine wrath and from the power of your natural passions. The Lord grant you a resurrection to-night, O you who are dead in sin, and his name shall have all the praise.

Our friends here have for some little time been in a small way assisting this Society by their contributions; they, therefore, are well acquainted. with it. I have not time this evening to enter into details about it, but I may just say that this Society has for a long time done a good work among the Jewish people; and I ask you to contribute to this among other good works as you feel moved to do whenever opportunity occurs.

C. H. Spurgeon