

SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT.

DEATH AND BURIAL OF GOG AND MAGOG.

A Sermon

PREACHED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 14TH, 1859, BY

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“So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God from that day and forward.” Ezekiel xxxix. 22.

It has been, and it still is a question among the learned as to what particular age of the church this and the preceding chapter belong; whether the circumstances here recorded have been fulfilled, or whether they yet remain to be fulfilled. This is the question of the learned; a question which of course still remains among them undecided. And yet I should think that the plain, straight-forward Christian would see that these two chapters, speaking of the inroads of Gog and Magog upon the people of God, and of their defeat, and of the triumph of the people of God; I should think the real Christian would see that these chapters belong to all ages of the church, and apply as much to one age as to another; at least, all the ages that succeed the recording of the prediction; although there may be and have been times and states of the church in which there is persecution; and at the end of the thousand years, as described in Revelation xx, we read that Gog and Magog will again be gathered together, and make another attempt; it is true these chapters will then have a more conspicuous fulfilment, and will appear in their meaning more conspicuous. But that does not at all do away with the fact that they belong to all ages of the church. We know ourselves that there are times when the judgments of the Most High have a more solemn effect upon our minds than at another; and there are times when the Lord Jesus Christ is more precious to our souls than at another time; and there are times when we enjoy victory and dominion over everything contrary to our faith and to the freedom of our souls more than at other times; but then these changes do not alter the fact that the gospel belongs to us all through our life; belongs to us as much when we are not realizing its advantages as it does when we are realizing the same.

Our text then shews, or rather indicates the way in which the house of Israel shall know that the Lord is their God. “The house of Israel shall know
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that I am the Lord their God from that day and forward." Here is the *day* indicated as well as the *manner*. "So" is a word meaning manner; an adverb of manner. And then here is a *day* spoken of; and this day will mean a *time*; and this time will divide itself as presented in the preceding parts of the chapter. First it is *a day of victory over the enemy*; secondly, it is *a day of burning*, in which the weapons of the enemy are to be burnt; thirdly, it is *a day of burying*, in which the enemy is to be buried; it is *a day in which the remainder of the enemies are to be given to the beasts of the field and to the fowls of the air*. So, by this kind of dealing with the house of Israel, shall they know that the Lord is their God from that day and forward. I cannot then myself see after all that there is so much ambiguity about these mysterious chapters in relation to Gog and Magog. Gog is the name of a prince, and Magog is the name of a people; and therefore refer not to any particular prince or any particular people, but they refer to all the enemies of the gospel that have ever appeared and ever can appear in any form or shape whatever. Here is where men are wrong, in attempting to fix upon some particular prince, or some particular age, or some particular nation; whereas there is an ambiguity about the description; and I was going to say its ambiguity is its excellency; because it is intended to apply to the enemies of the church in all ages.

I. I notice, then, first, WHERE THIS VICTORY IS? It is said of Gog and Magog that they shall fall upon the mountains of Israel. That is where the people of God are to gain the victory, upon the mountains of Israel; they are to be brought there, and there none can hurt them. Is there anything difficult about this? Not to the real Christian; I hope to make it before I close, as clear as possible. First, then, this victory is to be upon the mountains of Israel; there Gog and Magog, there Satan and all the powers of darkness are to be overcome. Let us hear the word of the Lord upon it. The word of the Lord upon it, standeth thus; that a sinner is brought to see and know that according to the law of Sinai there is no hope for him, there is nothing but tribulation, and wrath, and destruction to him; and therefore being brought from Sinai he is brought to Zion; brought to look to the Lord as the God of Zion, and brought to know that in and by Christ Jesus there is eternal life; there is everything in sweet contrast to that holy law by which we all stand condemned; and such an one, as soon as the Lord shall enable him, casts his anchor of hope upon the Lord Jesus Christ as the foundation that God has laid in Zion; he begins to look to the Saviour; he begins to see the way in which God is just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. Hence, it is written, "They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever." Just mark the language; Mount Zion is a name for Christ's kingdom; and as that kingdom cannot be moved, so they who trust in him are to be like the kingdom into which they are brought; that kingdom can never be moved; and they themselves can never be moved; the Lord on Mount Zion hath commanded his blessing, even life for evermore, and from that life they cannot be moved; from that self-acting command they cannot be moved; from that glorious testimony they cannot be moved; neither can they die any more; they have passed from death unto life, and shall not come into condemnation. Here is the victory. Let Satan come against us here, let sin come against us here, let persecution come against us here, let all the powers of darkness come against us here; they shall not obtain the victory. If they come against us in the world, in the flesh, in circumstances, there God may be overcome; but let God be brought to Mount Zion, where the Lord is with him; and where he is with the Lord; where the Lord is one with you, and

where you are one with him ; and where the Lord Jesus Christ is the King, having put away sin by the sacrifice of himself ; and grace reigns on this Mount Zion through his righteousness unto eternal life ; there you cannot be overcome. "So shall the house of Israel know that I am the Lord their God." Here it is that the people of God in all ages have gained the victory over Satan, over Gog and Magog ; who are the representatives not only of persecuting powers, but also of delusive powers ; that is to say, false religions. Catholicism is a false religion ; Mahometanism is a false religion ; Russianism is a false religion ; free-will and duty-faith are false religions ; and it matters not with the adversary in what shape or form he can overcome and deceive us, if he can but do so, whether by fraud or by force. But here, at Mount Zion, we stand safe ; there we have the victory already wrought for us ; and that victory is wrought by the Lord Jesus Christ ; only we must be brought to this Zion ; we must know our need of this free-grace order of things ; we must know that there is nothing but condemnation any where else ; that there is life nowhere else, sanctification nowhere else, justification nowhere else. Then mark how the word of the Lord goes on concerning those people that are thus brought to Zion ; that "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even for ever." Here it is that Magog is to fall ; here it is that Satan must fall ; here it is that sin must fall ; here it is the powers of hell must fall ; here it is that the light of the moon shall become as the light of the sun, here it is that the light of the sun shall become as the light of seven days ; here it is that the Lord maketh up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound ; this is the way of victory ; not a mere puny fleshly victory ; but that victory that brings my soul into a saving oneness with the Lord Jesus Christ ; that is the victory I want ; that victory which the martyrs gained when of them it is said, "They overcame by the blood of the Lamb ;" that is, by being brought to Mount Zion ; and "By the word of their testimony ;" that is, the word of God's truth ; and by their love to God, and to this order of things which the Holy Ghost wrote in their hearts. And hence those, that in the 12th chapter, are represented as conquerors, are in the 14th chapter represented as standing on Mount Zion with the Lamb of God, and the name of his Father upon their foreheads, standing there without fault before the throne of God. And then mark another threat to the enemy, which implies a promise to the friend. "For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous." The lot of the righteous will mean the liberty of the righteous ; the promised land belonging to the righteous, the inheritance of the righteous ; and the rod of the wicked will mean, the enemy that comes in to put the people of God down, and bring Baal and other false gods in. But there is a promise that the rod, the symbol of power, the power of this enemy, shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous. Why not ? "Lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity." Lest the righteous do,—and I say it with trembling and grief of heart,—lest the righteous, do as some men now seem to be doing ; men that I have all along held to be good men, but who are now putting forth the hand of fellowship to duty-faith, or to the universal exhortation system—that system that would rob the Saviour of his omnipotence, transfer it to the creature, and make out that the salvation of a sinner lies with that poor, helpless sinner himself ; there are men that are putting forth their hand to fellowship with such, and that is putting forth their hand to sanction the mystery of iniquity that worketh against the glorious gospel of the blessed God. But "there must," saith the Apostle, "be heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest." A man may stand

approved of men for a long time, and yet all the time be never approved of God; but by and bye the under-current of legality breaks out, overwhelms his free-grace profession; down it goes; up comes that which has always belonged to him, and he puts forth his hand to the fellowship of iniquity; turns round and levels his arrows directly against the very men that are favoured to stand fast in what he himself once professed to love. So the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot, the liberty, the land, of the righteous; lest the righteous should thereby be so deluded as to put forth their hands unto iniquity, to bring in false gods, and so bring us into bondage. Now the Lord then will bring his people on the vantage ground of victory; and that ground is Mount Zion, where, as the mountains are round about Jerusalem, he is round about his people; they shall not put forth their hands unto the fellowship of iniquity; if they do, they shall pay for it, as Jehoshaphat did; they shall pay for it as the prophet, the man of God, did, when he ate and drank with the false prophet at Bethel; or, they shall be boldly withstood to the face, as Peter was; or, severely chastised, as the Galatians were. There is but one sound thing in the world, and that is God's truth; and if you give up that, all is rottenness besides, depend upon it. God help us then to stand fast upon the vantage ground of Mount Zion, and having done all, to stand in this grace, not in creature works or doctrines; and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. And David prays for this people, he says, "O Lord, do good unto them that are good;" they are good in their religion, they are born of a good seed, incorruptible seed; they are good as to their standing in Christ; and they are upright in their hearts in their profession of love to his blessed name, and decision for it. "As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity; but peace shall be upon Israel." "So shall the house of Israel know that I am the Lord their God," by bringing them to this vantage ground upon the mountains of Israel; there Gog and Magog shall fall; there all the powers of darkness shall be overcome, but nowhere else; we shall never gain the victory anywhere else; the devil does not care for you anywhere else; sin does not care for you, death does not care for you anywhere else; the world does not care for you anywhere else; but when you are brought there, you are brought to where the world cannot come; they know us not there, they perceive us not there; they cannot understand the position in which we stand.

II. But secondly, by BURNING. Now the Lord hath declared that he would cause the bow to fall; he would smite the bow, the battle bow, out of the left hand of Gog, and cause the arrows to fall out of his right hand; and the people of Israel were to burn these weapons of war, burn them all; and they were to be seven years burning them. What curious things have been said upon this seven years burning. Men wish to take it literally, and they say it refers to a future age. Now just watch the absurdity of that idea. If it refer to a future age, they will not fight with bows and arrows; cannon, sword, musketry, are the implements of war now: and therefore it would not be true. No, friends you must take it in its proper sense. What are these weapons of war? False doctrines; and we are to burn them. Burn them? then you mean to say these false doctrines are the fuel, and you are to bring the fire. Yes, to bring the fire of God's truth, and burn them. They want us to leave off; they say, Oh, we wish you high doctrine people would not be so contentious. Ah, if you will not bring the fuel, we will let the fire go out; but as long as you bring your duty-faith, free-will, or other doctrines; so long as you bring the fuel, we must keep the fire up; we will bring in the gospel of God's truth; and "Is not my word like fire," saith the

Lord ; yes, it is like fire ; and the Lord hath said that " the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame ; and the house of Esau for stubble ; and they shall kindle in them, and devour them ; and there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau ;" Esau there being a poetic representation of the enemy. How long were they to be burning the weapons ? Seven years ; not seven years complete, but seven years current. Under the Old Testament dispensation the Hebrew servant, who was a type of Christ, served six years, and then came a seventh year of rest ; a type of the servitude of Christ ; so that it is by the complete servitude of Christ that these weapons are to be burnt ; bringing in the perfection of Christ's work, that will burn them up, depend upon it ; bring in the perfection of Christ's work, leaving the sinner nothing to do ; everything is done ; there is not a single thing that he needs for his eternal welfare that is not complete in Christ. God the Father put the man there by election ; Christ keeps him there ; the Holy Ghost quickens him there, brings him into oneness with Christ ; and there is completeness. And let the testimony of what Christ has done, his complete servitude, be brought in, and that will burn up all the weapons of war ; there will not be one left. This burning shall be of a spiritual kind ;

" They shall burn the weapons with fire." But, say the upholders of error, we wish to be brethren together. Ah, you fight against God's truth, and then want us to be friendly with you. Why, to be friendly with you on that ground is to be friendly with hell ; it is to be friendly with the filthy old serpent ; I shall not mince the matter, I can tell you, whether you like it or not ; to be friendly with you on that ground is to be friendly with the great dragon ; to be friendly with you upon the ground of your free-will or duty faith doctrines is to be friendly with the old whore of Babylon ; you may belong to a more respectable, a more refined part of her family perhaps, but still it is the same family ; the spirit of Anti-Christ is the spirit of Anti-Christ, let it appear in what form it may. And therefore, we must bring in the perfection of the Saviour's work ; and as the seven years denotes perfection, so on the ground of the Saviour's perfection these weapons of war shall be burnt, both in relation to the saved man, and in relation to others that would deceive him. Has not the Lord burnt up your weapons of war, my hearer ? Ah, say you, I belonged to Gog and Magog once ; I was an enemy once ; but the Lord met with me as he met with Saul of Tarsus ; took my armour from me, burnt up the weapons of war. And so, if you would now fight against God's truth, you could not find any weapons to fight with. No, say you, I love him for what he has done, I love him in the relation he bears ; and love him altogether in that order of things that he hath revealed ; and if I look about for the weapons I used to fight with I cannot find them ; they are all burnt up. " They shall burn the weapons with fire." What a strange description that appears to the carnal mind ; but if you take it spiritually it is clear enough. Bring in the testimony of Christ's sufferings ; that as a good minister * said the other day, Adam under an unbroken law could not stand : but Christ was born under a broken law, and yet stood, and mended it, and kept it, and magnified it, and honoured it, and established it, and came off victorious at the end. I thought it was a very nice idea ; I liked it very much. But again, look at that gospel by which the weapons of war are to be burned : being burned denotes also the completeness of the victory, together with the enemy's entire and eternal defeat, and, thus it is written, this shall be with burning and with fuel of fire. " Unto us a child

* Mr. John Foreman.

is born; unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder."

("How can we sink with such a prop,
That bears the earth and her huge columns up?")

"And his name shall be called Wonderful;" that is, admirable; and he is too; "Counsellor;" and he is too: "the mighty God;" and he is too: "the Prince of Peace." "And of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. "The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." What is the zeal for now-a-days? Not for God's truth, but for something else; for human aggrandizement I believe more than anything else. God forbid I should get better in the fleshly sense of the word; rather let me, as David said, in the sense in which he intended it, be more vile and more base in my own sight, and glory more than ever in the ark of the everlasting covenant, in those mercies by which alone we can be saved. What say you to the burning weapons of war? You know the beatitudes in the fifth of Matthew; now what are the eight woes in the 23rd chapter, but a negative put upon all the oppositions of men against the truths embodied in the eight beatitudes of the 5th chapter? I have gone through them from time to time; and that is just what they are. So then, friends, as long as the enemy will bring in his weapons of war; that is as long as they dispute against the truth, we must contend for the truth; as long as they bring the fuel, the fire will never go out; God Almighty forbid it should. Whenever we become careless as to what we believe and receive, then good bye to our religion; that is not the way that brings us to God. But he brings us to know him by bringing us to Zion; secondly, by burning up the weapons of war; so that we can no more fight against the truth; and thirdly, by burning up other weapons, or weapons that are cast among us, that we will not touch, but burn them up by the testimony of God's truth, on the ground of the perfection of the Saviour's servitude—seven years.

I come now to step the third. Step the third is, we are to bury Gog and Magog, who are to have graves in Israel; not in the internal land; but a proper cemetery; for it is on the east side of the sea; and there Gog and Magog shall be buried. Who are to be the buriers? Who are to be the buriers? Why, the ministers and all the people of God. How long are they to be burying them? Why, seven months. Well, what are you going to make out of that? How long was it from the Passover to the great day of atonement? Why, say you, seven months current. Very well then, we begin with the Passover; and that begins to bury all our sins; they are dead to us; we are dead to the world, and the world dead to us; so that is one step towards all our sins being buried, and towards all our adversaries being as good as buried, they cannot get at us; they are dead; they have lost their power; "Not a dog shall move his tongue against any of the children of Israel. I then go on to the second step; the feast of first fruits. There I am accepted of the Lord; and by that testimony I can see more clearly that my sins are dead and buried; bless the Lord for that; there is only one thing can give them life, and that is God's law; and that God's law can never do, because Christ is the end of the law; my sins can never recover their life, only by another law being given in opposition to Christ; my sins can never recover their life, only on the ground of something deficient in the Saviour's life or in the Saviour's death. I then come to the great day of atonement; all three of these typical of the one Sacrifice, Christ

Jesus. As the seven years denote perfection, so the seven months convey the same idea of completeness. Now "so shall the house of Israel know that I am the Lord their God." Let me stand on mount Zion; let my weapons of war be burnt; let me feel that all false doctrines shall be burnt; that the fire of contention shall never go out until they are all burnt; so shall I know that the Lord is my God. Then let me see that my sins are buried, and my enemies as good as buried; they are buried on the east side of the Dead Sea, out of the Land; so that between them and myself there is death; especially the death of Christ—oh, there is something very nice in the idea. I do not know a more beautiful illustration of the death of our sins than the overthrow of the Egyptians in the Red Sea; how impossible it was for any of them ever to rise from its waters to lift up a finger against the Israelites. And so when you pass the Jordan, pass through safely, and appear before God, not one of your sins shall appear with you; it is just as impossible as that an Egyptian could raise himself from the dead, march across the wilderness, go into the wilderness, go into the promised land, and appear in the temple against the Israelites. That was a literal impossibility; and so it is now a gospel impossibility that a single sin of a saint of God should appear before the throne to accuse that saint. And so shall ye know that the Lord is your God.

Then the fourth thing in this chapter remarkable is that they shall know the Lord is their God by other people being given to the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air. There is a great sacrifice represented; and the Lord calls the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air to the great sacrifice. Now what I am going to say you cannot call it mere conceit; it is enough to make any one tremble at the thought, looking at the meaning of it; the meaning of it is awful, more awful than I can describe. Who are the beasts of the field? Ungodly and superstitious rulers; whether they are popes or despots. Who are the fowls of the air? It is another name for the same persons; birds of prey: oh, look at the millions of souls that are preyed upon by Mahometanism and other systems. What are your Roman Catholic priests? what are your Puseyites? what are all false ministers? what are all the men that stand opposed to the gospel of God; and will not suffer the Scriptures to be opened and read in their nations? What is all this? It is God's great sacrifice, giving the nations up to this strong delusion. Look then at the difference. Christian, look at your standing; so far from your having to look at your Maker through the clouds of human tradition, through the medium of humanly instituted ceremonies and commandments, not a soul nor circumstance stands between you and your God. You come to the Bible, there you come to Jesus Christ at once, without a veil between; there you have God's own Son, by the blessed God's own truth; there you have God himself, by his own Son; there you have God all in all. What a difference! How great our privileges in England, then, friends. May the Lord increase the knowledge, experience, zeal, and labours, and usefulness of the few that do not defile their garments, but that stand fast in the purity of the truth; they shall walk with Christ in white, for they shall be deemed worthy, not that they are worthy by anything they do, but they are made worthy by the imputation unto them of that wedding garment, that righteousness which alone can exalt them into the light of God's countenance, or bring them with acceptance into his presence. Is it a fiction that I am talking about; is it not an awful fact that in our own land thousands of souls are given up to be a prey to delusion? What therefore are all those rulers, let them appear in whatever shape or form they may, political, ecclesiastical, or any other, that prey upon the

souls of men? They are the beasts of the field; they belong to this world; they are strangers to Christ, strangers to God, strangers to his house, strangers to his mercy-seat, strangers to his counsel, strangers to his loving-kindness; strangers to that narrow path which the vulture's eye hath not seen—and the vulture is a bird of prey, and which the lion's whelps have not trodden, and the lion is a beast of prey. But the Lord has promised to deliver his flock from these beasts of prey; he will take care of them, carrying them in his arms, gathering them to his bosom. "So shall the house of Israel know that I am the Lord their God." Has not the Lord done these things for us? Is there any question about the matter? Has he not brought us to Zion? and is not victory obtained there, and only there? Has he not burnt up our enmity against him? Has he not made us willing still to contend for the truth, and make use of the testimonies of his word to oppose, and stand fast against those deadly weapons against his truth that men throw amongst us, and to burn them up? And has he not given us to see that by the perfection of the Saviour's work our sins are buried, and our enemies as good as buried?

But if there shall be a bone left behind, they are to set it up, and set a sign by it; and as the buriers come along, they are to bury it. Why, you are going to make out that the ministers are the buriers, that they are a sort of undertakers. So they are a sort of undertakers. There is a bone—you are to set up a sign by it. What do you mean by the bone? Why, a dead professor. What sign are you to set up by it? Why, a living possessor; and the contrast will appear so great that we shall have to take the bone and bury it; and so shall you cleanse the land; you shall not mix the clean with the unclean; you shall not mix the different kinds of seeds; let them remain distinct; take forth the precious from the vile. ~~They dress up~~ the old bones now-a-day, and want to persuade you they are new creatures; but there is a wonderful difference between a painted cheek and a really healthy one; between outward decorations and healthy vitals, a wonderful difference between the two.

"So shall the house of Israel know that I am the Lord their God." Our time is too far gone for me to notice the prospects of this people, indicated in the latter part of our text, namely, "From that day and forward."