

ham, after leaving his native country, in obedience to a direct command of God, dwelling in a new land called Canaan, now known as Palestine; and while there, we learn of the Lord conversing with him, and promising him and his seed “the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession.” What does this all mean? Did Abraham ever inherit any of that land? Not a foot of it. He did buy a place—a burying place for himself and kindred; but he did not realize this promise, the possession of the land of Canaan, but on the contrary, he counted himself a stranger and pilgrim in that very land. And not only Abraham, but his descendants have failed to realize this promise. The martyr Stephen, who lived many centuries afterward, just prior to his death, in bearing testimony to the people who stood before him, concerning Abraham, said, referring to this promise of the Lord, that he did not receive so much as to set his foot on, during his lifetime. Nevertheless, the Lord promised him the whole of the land, to be for an everlasting inheritance, for himself and his seed after him. The Apostle Paul, speaking of the same thing, says, that “they all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off.” How far? Thousands of years after they should sleep in the tomb. They looked forward in faith to the vast futurity, being persuaded of the truth of the promise; but they saw that before they could inherit the promised land, they would have to seek a city, that was in the heavens, and there to dwell, until the due time of the Lord should bring them in possession of their inheritance. The Prophet Ezekiel saw the way in which they should come in possession of it, as is recorded in the 37th chapter of his prophecy. The Spirit of the Lord took him into the midst of a valley—

a great cemetery, as it were, where he saw a vast quantity of bones which were very dry, the flesh having crumbled to dust. And the question was put to him, no doubt to try his faith, “Son of man, can these bones live?” Ezekiel was not an infidel, he did not say it was impossible, nor that there could be no such miracle, but he said, “O, Lord God, thou knowest.” He was willing the Lord should know all about it, and that he should display his power provided he saw proper to do so. Then the Lord commanded him to prophesy, using these words: “Prophesy unto these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. 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.” And after he had thus spoken, the Prophet tells us that “there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone.” They did not make any mistake, such as one bone belonging to a certain tabernacle uniting with that of another; but each bone joined its fellow bone, and sinews and flesh and skin covered them, and thus the tabernacles were formed. But there was as yet no life in them. Therefore he was commanded to prophesy again, 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.” He did so “and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.” This was a vision of the resurrection—the resurrection of the ancient patriarchs and prophets of God, and all the righteous of Israel.