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COMMENTARY

**COMMENTARY
ON THE PROPHET
JOEL**

by John Calvin

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THE COMMENTARIES

OF JOHN CALVIN

ON THE

PROPHET JOEL

*Now first translated from the original Latin, by the Rev. John
Owen, vicar of Thrussington, Leicestershire.*

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

THIS VOLUME contains the Writings of three Prophets. Joel exercised his office among the Jews; Amos, though a native of Judea, was yet appointed a Prophet of The Ten Tribes; and OBADIAH's prophecy refers only to Edom.

The great master of Hebrew criticism, Bishop Lowth, speaking, in his twenty-first Prelection, of Joel, says, that though he differs much in style from Hosea, he is yet "*equally poetical.*" He represents him as "*elegant, clear, diffuse, and flowing, and also very sublime, severe, and fervid.*" Admitting the perspicuity of his diction, and the clearness of his arrangements, he yet confesses that the matter which he handles is sometimes obscure, especially towards the end of his Prophecy.

With regard to the style of Amos, the Bishop differs widely from Jerome, who has characterized the Prophet as "*unskillful in speech, but not in knowledge,*" (*imperitum sermone, set non in scientia.*) Lowth, on the contrary, regarded him as "*not a whit behind the very chiefest Prophets, being in elevation of sentiment and nobleness of mind almost equal to the very firsts and hardly inferior to any of them in splendor of diction and elegance of composition.*"

OF OBADIAH, nothing more is said by the Bishop than that he left but a small monument of his genius, and that a considerable portion of that is contained in the prophecy of Jeremiah. Of his composition Dr. Henderson says, "*Its principal features are animation, regularity, and perspicuity.*"

There is especially one subject in connection with the present Volume, which seems to require particular notice — THE INTERPRETATION OF THOSE PROPHECIES WHICH SPEAK OF THE FUTURE RESTORATION OF THE JEWS TO THEIR OWN LAND. CALVIN viewed some passages, as having been already accomplished in their return from Babylon, which in the estimation of others are yet to be fulfilled; while he interpreted those which evidently refer to what is future, in such a way as clearly shows that he did not consider that the Jews are to be restored again to their own country. That justice may be done to him, we must know and bear in mind the principles by which he was guided: for it is not to be supposed, that one so versed in

Scripture, who had studied it with so much labor, and manifested, as it is commonly admitted, so much penetration and discernment as an expounder, would have taken such a view of this subject on slight grounds, without adopting a rule of interpretation, which, according to what he thought, was countenanced by Scriptural examples.

It must first be observed, that CALVIN, in common with others, regarded the history as well erg the institutions of the people of Israel, as in great measure typical of things under the Gospel. Their temporal evils and blessings, their temporal oppressions and deliverances, were intended to set forth the spiritual state and condition of the Christian Church. The free choice of the people by God, their Egyptian bondage, their passage through the wilderness and their possession of the land of Canaan, were events symbolical of things connected with that spiritual community afterwards formed by the preaching of the Gospel; and of the same character was the subsequent captivity of that people in Babylon, and their restoration afterwards to their own land.

The next thing to be noticed is, that Promises of Blessings made to the people of Israel had in some instances a twofold meaning, and had reference to two things — the one temporal and the other spiritual. The restoration, for instance, from Babylon, was a prelude of the restoration or redemption by Christ. It was not only typical, but a kind of an initiative process, which was to be completed, though in a sublimer sense, by the Savior of man. The first was a restoration from temporal evils; the second was still a restoration, but from evils of a spiritual kind. The performance of the promise, in one case, was the commencement of a restorative work, which was to be completed in the other: the temporal restoration was eventually succeeded by that which is spiritual.

But the most material point in interpreting the Prophecies is The Language which is Used: rightly to understand this language forms the main difficulty. There are Promises which, as admitted by Calvin, look beyond the restoration from Babylon; and they are couched in terms, which, if taken literally, most evidently show that there is to be a second restoration. What is there, it may be asked, which can justify a departure from the letter of the promises? This is the chief question, on which the whole matter depends. Calvin evidently thought that the literal sense cannot be taken, as that would be inconsistent with the general character of

the ancient prophecies; for he considered that many of the prophecies, which relate to the Church of the New Testament, were conveyed in a language suitable to the institutions then existing, and in consistency with the notions which then prevailed, as to religion and divine worship. Hence the Temple, Mount Sion, sacrifices, offerings, the priests, as well as the restoration of the people to their own land, and their perpetual establishment in it, are often spoken of in those very promises which incontestably refer to the Gospel dispensation. Now, if in some cases, as confessed by most, if not by all, the language is not to be taken literally, but as representing the success, the extension and the blessings of the Gospel, why should it be taken literally in other similar cases? The possession of the land of Canaan was to the people of Israel one of their chief blessings, and was a signal token of the divine favor. Banishment from it was not only a temporal loss, but involved also the loss of all their religious privileges. Nothing, therefore, could have conveyed to their minds a higher idea of redemption than the promise of restoration to their own land, and a perpetual possession of it.

The foregoing seem to have been the views by which CALVIN was guided in his interpretation: and the Editor must be allowed to express his concurrence, though he is fully aware, that there have been, and that there are still, many celebrated men of a contrary opinion.

There is another idea which CALVIN suggests, in connection with this subject. He regarded THE PROMISES made in some instances by the Prophets as to the future prosperity of the people of Israel, and the perpetuity of their institutions and privileges, as CONDITIONAL, even when no condition is expressed. Instances of the same kind are to be found in the writings of Moses and of the earlier Prophets. Promises of perpetuity are made, (as for instance, respecting the priesthood,) and often unaccompanied by any conditions; and yet they were conditional, as the event proved, and in accordance with the tenor of the covenant under which the Israelites lived. The same view may also be taken of such promises as are found in the later Prophets, that is, such as bear on them a national stamp: they were announced unconditionally; but as they included blessings which belonged to the people as subjects of the Mosaic covenant, they were necessarily conditional, dependent as to their accomplishment on their obedience. Hence Jeremiah, who had himself announced promises of this kind, says, that the time would come when

God would establish another covenant; and for this reason, because the people of Israel had broken the former covenant.

The Editor feels it to be his duty to say generally of CALVIN'S EXPOSITIONS that the more maturely he considers them, after having compared them with those of others, both modern and ancient, the more satisfied he is with them, and the more he admires the acuteness and solid judgment they display. Perhaps no individual, possessing his high qualifications, natural, acquired, and spiritual, has ever, either in ancient or modern times, exercised himself so much in the study of the Holy Scriptures, and produced Comments so original and so valuable.

What is remarkable in CALVIN as an Expositor is his unvarying attention to the context. This was his polar star, which enabled him to steer clear and safe through many intricacies and ambiguities no to the meaning of particular words, and even of sentences. His first object seems to have been to ascertain the general drift of a passage or of a chapter; and his next, to harmonize its several parts. There are many words which have various meanings, and the surest way of ascertaining their meaning in any given sentence, is to inquire what comports with the context. There is indeed no other way by which we can make a choice, when a word admits of different senses. Probably no Commentator has ever paid so much attention to this canon of interpretation as CALVIN did. The ground on which he almost at all times rejects a sense given by others to words or to sentences is, that it does not suit the place, or, to adopt an expression he frequently uses, that it does not square (*non quadrat*) with the passage.

It has been often thought that more difficulty attends the Hebrew language than other languages, owing to the variety of meaning which belongs to some of its words. But this variety exists quite as much, and indeed much more, in many other languages, and even in our own. What enables us in numberless instances to ascertain the meaning of a word, and even often of a sentence, is what stands connected with it, that is, the context. It is what goes before and comes after, not only in a sentence, but often in a long passage, that explains the precise meaning of many words. To transfer the meaning of a word from one passage to another, and to say that because it has a certain meaning in one place, it must have the same in another, (except the word has but one meaning,) is certainly not the way to explain

Scripture or any other writing. The best expositor in this respect is no doubt the context.

It is well known that these LECTURES were delivered extempore, and were taken down by some of those who heard them; and we have them now as thus taken down, and afterwards corrected by CALVIN. This circumstance accounts for the occasional defect of order and for occasional repetitions. But these drawbacks seem to have been more than compensated by the freshness and vigor, the life and animation which these spontaneous effusion of his mind exhibit. In none of his other writings, as it appears to the Editor, has CALVIN shone forth with so much lustre as an able, clear, plain, and animated an Expounder, as in these LECTURES. There is a flow and energy to be found in them not equaled in those productions which he composed in private, and finished with more careful attention to order and style. When the mind is well stored and the memory retentive, as was the case in no ordinary degree with CALVIN, a public auditory has usually the effect of calling into action all the powers of the mind; and, as frequently in the present instance, the consequence is, that the finest and the most striking thoughts are elicited, and are expressed in a language the most energetic, calculated to produce the deepest impressions.

J.O.

Thrussington November, 1846.

CALVIN'S PREFACE TO JOEL

I PROCEED now to explain THE PROPHET JOEL. The time in which he prophesied is uncertain. Some of the Jews imagine that he exercised his office in the time of Joram, king of Israel, because a dreadful famine then prevailed through the whole land, as it appears evident from sacred history; and as the Prophet record a famine, they suppose that his ministry must be referred to that time. Some think, that he taught under Manasseh, but they bring no reason for this opinion; it is, therefore, a mere conjecture. Others think that he performed his office as a teacher not only under one king, but that he taught, at the same time with Isaiah, under several kings.

But as there is no certainty, it is better to leave the time in which he taught undecided; and, as we shall see, this is of no great importance. Not to know the time of HOSEA would be to readers a great loss for there are many parts which could not be explained without a knowledge of history; but as to JOEL there is, as I have said, less need of this; for the import of his doctrine is evident, though his time be obscure and uncertain. But we may conclude that he taught at Jerusalem, or at least in the kingdom of Judah. As Hosea was appointed a Prophet to the kingdom of Israel, so Joel had another appointment; for he was to labor especially among the Jews and not among the Ten Tribes: this deserves to be particularly noticed.

Now the sum of the Book is this: At the beginning, he reproves the stupidity of the people, who, when severely smitten by God, did not feel their evils, but on the contrary grew hardened under them: this is one thing. Then he threatens far more grievous evils; as the people became so insensible under all their punishments, that they were not humbled, the Prophet declares that there were evils at hand much worse than those they had hitherto experienced: this is the second thing. Thirdly, he exhorts the people to repentance, and shows that there was required no common evidence of repentance; for they had not lightly offended God, but by their perverseness provoked him to bring on them utter ruin: since, then, their obstinacy had been so great, he bids them to come as suppliants with tears, with sackcloth, with mourning, with ashes, that they might obtain

mercy; for they were unworthy of being regarded by the Lord, except they thus submissively humbled themselves: this is the third subject. The fourth part of the Book is taken up with promises; for he prophesies of the Kingdom of Christ, and shows, that though now all things seemed full of despair, yet God had not forgotten the covenant he made with the fathers; and that therefore Christ would come to gather the scattered remnants, yea, and to restore to life his people, though they were now lost and dead.

This is the sum and substance. But we shall see, as we proceed, that THE CHAPTERS have been absurdly and foolishly divided. He thus begins —

CHAPTER 1

LECTURE THIRTY-EIGHTH

<290101> JOEL 1:1-4

1. The word of the LORD that came to Joel the son of Pethuel.

2. Hear this, ye old men, and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land. Hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers?

3. Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation.

4. That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath

1. Verbum Jehovae quod fuit ad Joel, filium Pethuel.

2. Audite hoc senes, et auscultate omnes incolae terrae, an fuerit hoc diebus vestris, et si diebus patrum vestrorum.

3. Super hoc filiis vestris narrate, et filii vestri filiis suis, et filii ipsorum generationi posterae.

4. Residuum locustae comedit (est alia species) bruchus (ita ponamus, quoniam non possumus certo scire quatenam fuerint istae species) et residuum bruchi comedit locusta et residuum locustae comedit eruca (alii primo loco ponunt Erucam, est proprie chenille, et puto potius esse hoc posterius. Picardi vocant casee, quasi חסיל: verisimile est deductum fuisse nomen illud vulgare ab Hebraeis, quia est fere idem: sed tamen ego non anxie sudo in istis nominibus, quia de sensu Prophetæ satis constabit. Nunc venio ad inscriptionem libri.)

The word of Jehovah which came to Joel, the son of Pethuel. He names here his father; it is hence probable that he was a man well known and of some celebrity. But who this Pethuel was, all now are ignorant. And what the Hebrews hold as a general rule, that a prophet is designated, whenever his father's name is added, appears to me frivolous; and we see how bold they are in devising such comments. When no reason for any thing appears to them, they invent some fable, and allege it as a divine truth. When, therefore, they are wont thus to trifle, I have no regard for what is held by them as a rule. But yet it is probable, that when the Prophets are mentioned as having sprung from this or that father, their fathers were men of some note.

Now what he declared by saying, that he delivered the word of the Lord, is worthy of being observed; for he shows that he claimed nothing for himself, as an individual, as though he wished to rule by his own judgment, and to subject others to his own fancies; but that he relates only what he had received from the Lord. And since the Prophets claimed no authority for themselves, except as far as they faithfully executed the office divinely committed to them, and delivered, as it were from hand to hand, what the Lord commanded, we may hence feel assured that no human doctrines ought to be admitted into the Church. Why? Because as much as men trust in themselves, so much they take away from the authority of God. This preface then ought to be noticed, which almost all the Prophets use, namely, that they brought nothing of their own or according to their own judgment, but that they were faithful dispensers of the truth intrusted to them by God.

And the word is said to have been to Joel; not that God intended that he alone should be his disciple, but because he deposited this treasure with him, that he might be his minister to the whole people. Paul also says the same thing, — that to the ministers of the Gospel was committed a message for Christ, or in Christ's name, to reconcile men to God, (<470520> 2 Corinthians 5:20;) and in another place he says, 'He has deposited with us this treasure as in earthen vessels,' (<470407> 2 Corinthians 4:7.) We now understand why Joel says, that the word of the Lord was delivered to him, it was not that he might be the only disciple; but as some teacher was necessary, Joel was chosen to whom the Lord committed this office. Then the word of God belongs indeed indiscriminately to all; and yet it is

committed to Prophets and other teachers; for they are, so to speak, as it were trustees (*depositarii* — depositories.)

As to the verb **עָשָׂה** *ie*, there is no need of philosophizing so acutely as Jerome does: “How was the word of the Lord made?” For he feared lest Christ should be said to be made, as he is the word of the Lord. These are trifles, the most puerile. He could not, however, in any other way get rid of the difficulty but by saying that the word is said to be made with respect to man whom God addresses, and not with respect to God himself. All this, as ye must see, is childish; for the Prophet says here only, that the word of the Lord was sent to him, that is, that the Lord employed him as his messenger to the whole people. But after having shown that he was a fit minister of God, being furnished with his word, he speaks authoritatively, for he represented the person of God.

We now see what is the lawful authority which ought to be in force in the Church, and which we ought to obey without dispute, and to which all ought to submit. It is then only that this authority exists, when God himself speaks by men, and the Holy Spirit employs them as his instruments. For the Prophet brings not forward any empty title; he does not say that he is a high priest of the tribe of Levi, or of the first order, or of the family of Aaron. He alleges no such thing, but says that the word of God was deposited with him. Whosoever then demands to be heard in the Church, must of necessity really prove that he is a preacher of God’s word; and he must not bring his own devices, nor blend with the word any thing that proceeds from the judgment of his own flesh.

But first the Prophet reproves the Jews for being so stupid as not to consider that they were chastised by the hand of God, though this was quite evident. Hence they pervert, in my judgment, the meaning of the Prophet, who think that punishments are here denounced which were as yet suspended; for they transfer all these things to a future time. But I distinguish between this reproof and the denunciations which afterwards follow. Here then the Prophet reproaches the Jews, that having been so severely smitten, they did not gain wisdom; and yet even fools, when the rod is applied to their backs, know that they are punished. Since then the Jews were so stupid, that when even chastised they did not understand that they had to do with God, the Prophet justly reproves this madness. “*Hear*”, he says, “*ye old men; give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land, and*

declare this to your children”. But the consideration of this passage I shall put off till tomorrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God that as almost the whole world give such loose reins to their licentiousness, that they hesitate not either to despise or to regard as of no value thy sacred word — Grant, O Lord that we may always retain such reverence as is justly due to it and to thy holy oracles and be so moved whenever thou deignest to address us that being truly humbled, we may be raised up by faith to heaven, and by hope gradually attain that glory which is as yet hid from us. And may we at the same time so submissively restrain ourselves, as to make it our whole wisdom to obey thee and to do thee service, until thou gatherest us into thy kingdom, where we shall be partakers of thy glory, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

LECTURE THIRTY-NINTH.

Hear this, ye old men; and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land: has this been in your days, and in the days of your fathers? This declare to your children and your children to their children, and their children to the next generation: the residue of the locust has the chafer eaten, and the residue of the chafer has the cankerworm eaten, and the residue of the cankerworm has the caterpillar eaten^{f1}. I have in the last Lecture already mentioned what I think of this passage of the Prophet. Some think that a future punishment is denounced; but the context sufficiently proves that they mistake and pervert the real meaning of the Prophet; for, on the contrary, he reproves here the hardness of the people, — that they fell not their plagues. And as men are not easily moved by God's judgments, the Prophet here declares that God had executed such a vengeance as could not be regarded otherwise than miraculous; as though he said, "God often punishes men, and it behoves them to be attentive as soon as he raises up his finger. But common punishments are wont to be unheeded; men soon forget those punishments to which they have been accustomed. God has, however, treated you in an unusual manner, having openly as it were put forth his hand from heaven, and brought on you punishments nothing less than miraculous. Ye must then be more than stupid, if ye perceive not that you are smitten by God's hand." This is the true meaning of the Prophet, and may be easily gathered from the words.

Hear, ye old men, he says. He expressly addresses the old, because experience teaches men much; and the old, when they see any thing new or unusual, must know, that it is not according to the ordinary course of things. He who has past his fiftieth or sixtieth year, and sees something new happening which he had never thought of, doubtless acknowledges it as the unusual work of God. This is the reason why the Prophet directs here his discourse to the old; as though he said, "I will not terrify you about nothing; but let the old hear, who have been accustomed for many years to many revolutions; let them now answer me, whether in their whole life, which has been an age on the earth, have they seen any such thing." We now perceive the design of the Prophet; for he intended to awaken the Jews that they might understand that God had put forth his hand from heaven, and that it was impossible to ascribe what they had

seen with their eyes to chance or to earthly causes, but that it was a miracle. And his object was to make the Jews at length ashamed of their folly in not having hitherto been attentive to God's punishments, and in having always flattered themselves, as though God slept in heaven, when yet he so violently thundered against them, and intended by an extraordinary course to move them, that they might at last perceive that they were summoned to judgment.

He afterwards adds, *And all ye inhabitants of the land*. Had the Prophet addressed only the old, some might seize on some pretext for their ignorance; hence he addressed and from the least to the greatest; and this he did, that the young might not exempt themselves from blame in proceeding in their obstinacy and in thus mocking God, when he called them to repentance. *Hear*, he says, *all ye inhabitants of the land; has this been in your days or in the days of your fathers?* He says first, has such a thing been in your days, for doubtless what happens rarely deserves a greater consideration. It is indeed true that foolish men are blind to the daily works of God; as the favor of God in making his sun to rise daily is but little thought of by us. This happens through our ingratitude; but our ingratitude is doubled, and is much more base and less excusable, when the Lord works in an unwonted manner, and we yet with closed eyes overlook what ought to be deemed a miracle. This dullness the Prophet now reproves, Has such a thing, he says, "happened in your days, or in the days of your fathers? Ye can recall to mind what your fathers have told you. It is certain that for two ages no such thing has happened. Your torpidity then is extreme, since ye neglect this judgment of God, which from its very rareness ought to have awakened your minds."

He then adds, *Tell it to your children, your children to their children, their children to the next generation*. In this verse the Prophet shows that the matter deserved to be remembered, and was not to be despised by posterity, even for many generations. It appears now quite clear that the Prophet threatens not what was to be, as some interpreters think; it would have been puerile: but, on the contrary, he expostulates here with the Jews, because they were so slothful and tardy in considering God's judgments; and especially as it was a remarkable instance, when God employed not usual means, but roused, and, as it were, terrified men by prodigies. *Of this then tell*: for *עליה* *olie* means no other thing than 'tell or declare this thing to your children;' and further, *your children to their*

children. When any thing new happens, it may be, that we are at first moved with some wonder; but our feeling soon vanishes with the novelty, and we disregard what at first caused great astonishment. But the Prophet here showed, that such was the judgment of God of which he speaks, that it ought not to have been overlooked, no, not even by posterity. *Let your children*, he says, *declare it* to those after them, and their children to the fourth generation: it was to be always remembered.

He adds what that judgment was, — that the hope of food had for many years disappointed them. It often happened, we know, that locusts devoured the standing corn; and then the chafers and the palmer worms did the same: these were ordinary events. But when one devastation happened, and another followed, and there was no end; when there had been four barren years, suddenly produced by insects, which devoured the growth of the earth; — this was certainly unusual. Hence the Prophet says, that this could not have been chance; for God intended to show to the Jews some extraordinary portent, that even against their will they might observe his hand. When any thing trifling happens, if it be rare, it will strike the attention of men; for we often see that the world makes a great noise about frivolous things. But this wonder, says the Prophet, “ought to have produced effect on you. What then will ye do, since ye are starving, and the causes are evident; for God has cursed your land, and brought these insects, which have consumed your food before your eyes. Since it is so, it is surely the time for you to repent; and you have been hitherto very regardless having overlooked God’s judgments, which have been so remarkable and so memorable.” Let us now proceed.

<290105> JOEL 1:5	
5. Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the new wine; for it is cut off from your mouth.	5. Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the new wine; for it is cut off from your mouth.

The Prophet adds this verse for the sake of amplifying; for when God sees men either contemptuously laughing at or disregarding his judgments, he derides them; and this mode the Prophet now adopts. ‘Ye drunkards,’ he

says, 'awake, and weep and howl.' In these words he addresses, on the subject in hand, those who had willfully closed their eyes to judgments so manifest. The Jews had become torpid, and had covered themselves over as it were with hardness; it was then necessary to draw them forth as by force into the light. But the Prophet accosts the drunkards by name; and it is probable that this vice was then very common among the people. However that might be, the Prophet by mentioning this instance shows more convincingly, that there was no pretense for passing by things, and that the Jews could not excuse their indifference if they took no notice; for the very drunkards, who had degenerated from the state of men, did themselves feel the calamity, for the wine had been cut off from their mouth. And this expression of the Prophet, "*Awake*", ought to be noticed; for the drunkards, even while awake, are asleep, and also spend a great portion of time in sleep. The Prophet had this in view, that men, though not endued with great knowledge, but even void of common sense, could no longer flatter themselves; for the very drunkards, who had wholly suffocated their senses, and had become thus estranged in their minds, did yet perceive the judgment of God; though drowsiness held them bound, they were yet constrained to awake at such a manifest punishment. What then does this ignorance mean, when ye see not that you are smitten by God's hand?

To the same purpose are the words, *Weep and howl*. Drunkards, on the contrary, give themselves up to mirth, and intemperately indulge themselves; and there is nothing more difficult than to make them to feel sorrow; for wine so infatuates their senses, that they continue to laugh in the greatest calamities. But the Prophet says, *Weep and howl*, ye drunkards! What then ought sober men to do? He then adds, *Cut off is the wine from your mouth*. He says not, "*The use of wine is taken away from you*;" but he says, *from your mouth*. Though no one should think of vineyards or of winecellars or of cups, yet they shall be forced, willing or unwilling, to feel the judgment of God in their mouth and in their lips. This is what the Prophet means. We then see how much he aggravates what he had said before: and we must remember that his object was to strike shame into the people, who had become thus torpid with regard to God's judgments.

As to the word עִסִּים *osis*, some render it new wine. עֹסֶם *osas* is to press; and hence עִסִּים *osis* is properly the wine that is pressed in the

wine-vat. New wine is not what is drawn out of the bottle, but what is pressed out as it were by force. But the Prophet, I have no doubt, includes here under one kind every sort of wine. Let us go on.

<290106> JOEL 1:6-7	
6. For a nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number, whose teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion.	6. Quia gens ascendit super terram meam, robusta et absque numero, dentes ejus dentes leonis, et maxillae (alii vertunt, molares) leonis illis (quanquam aliud est nomen: alii vertunt, leunculum.)
7. He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig tree: he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away; the branches thereof are made white.	7. Posuit vineam meam in vastitatem (vel, desolationem) et ficulneam meam in decorticationem: nudando nudavit eam et disjecit, albi facti sunt rami ejus.

Of what some think, that punishment, not yet inflicted, is denounced here on the people, I again repeat, I do not approve; but, on the contrary, the Prophet, according to my view, records another judgment of God, in order to show that God had not only in one way warned the Jews of their sins, that he might restore them to a right mind; but that he had tried all means to bring them to the right way, though they proved to have been irreclaimable. After having then spoke of the sterility of the fields and of other calamities, he now adds that the Jews had been visited with war.^{F f2} Surely famine ought to have touched them, especially when they saw that evils, succeeding evils, had happened for several years contrary to the usual course of things, so that they could not be imputed to chance. But when God brought war upon them, when they were already worn out with famine, must they not have been more than insane in mind, to have continued astonished at God's judgments and not to repent? Then the meaning of the Prophet is, that God had tried, by every means possible, to find out whether the Jews were healable, and had given them every opportunity to repent, but that they were wholly perverse and untamable.

Then he says, *Verily a nation came up*. The particle כִּי *ki* is not to be taken as a causative, but only as explanatory, *Verily, or surely, he says, a*

nation came up; though an inference also is not amiss, if it be drawn from the beginning of the verse: 'Hear, ye old men, and tell your children;' what shall we tell? even this, that a nation, etc. But in this form also כִּי *ki* would be exegetical, and the sense would be the same. This much as to the meaning of the passage.

A nation, then, *came up over my land*. God here justly claims the land of Canaan as his own heritage, and does so designedly, that the Jews might more clearly know that he was angry with them; for their condition would not have been worse than that of other nations, had not God resolved to punish them for their sins. There is here then an implied comparison between Judea and other countries, as though the Prophet said, "How comes it, that your land is wasted by wars and many other calamities, while other countries are at rest? This land is no doubt sacred to God, for he has chosen it for himself, that he might rule in it; he has here his own habitation: it then must be that there is some cause for God's wrath, as your land is so miserably wasted, when other lands enjoy tranquillity." We now perceive what the Prophet means. *A nation*, he says, *came up upon my land*, and what then? God could surely have prevented this; he could have defended his own land, of which he was the keeper, and which was under his protection: how then had it happened that enemies with impunity inundated this land, having marched into it and utterly laid it waste, except that it had been forsaken by the Lord himself?

A nation, he says, *came up upon my land, strong and without number*; and further, *who had the teeth of a lion, the jaw-bones of a young lion*. The nations had no strength which God could not in an instant have broken down, nor had he need of mighty auxiliaries, for he could by a nod only have reduced to nothing whatever men might have attempted: when, therefore, the Assyrians so impetuously assailed the Jews they were necessarily exposed to the wantonness of their enemies, for they were unworthy of being protected, as hitherto, by the hand of God.

He afterwards adds, that *his vine had been exposed to desolation and waste, his fig-tree to the stripping of the bark*. God speaks not here of his own vine, as in some other places, in which he designates his Church by this term; but he calls everything on earth his own, as he calls the whole race of Abraham his children: and he thus reproaches the Jews for having reduced themselves to such wretchedness through their own fault; for they

would have never been spoiled by their enemies, had not God, who was wont to defend them, previously rejected them; for there was nothing in their land which he did not claim as his own; as he had chosen the people, so he had consecrated the land to himself. Whatsoever, then, enlisted in Judea, was, as it were, sacred to God. Now when both the vines and the fig-trees were exposed to the depredations of the unbelieving, it was certain that God no longer ruled there. How so? Even because the Jews had expelled him. He afterwards enlarges on the same subject; for what follows, *By denuding he has denuded it and cast it away*, is not a mere narrative; the Prophet here declares not simply what had taken place; but as we have already said, adduces more proof, and tries to awaken the drowsy senses of the people, yea, to arouse them from that lethargy by which the minds of all had been seized; hence it is that he uses in his teaching so many expressions. This is the reason why he says that the vine and the fig-tree had been denuded, and also that the leaves had been taken away, that the branches had been made bare and white; so that there remained neither produce nor growth.

Many interpreters join these three verses with the former, as if the Prophet now expressed what he had said before of the palmer worm, the chafer, and the locust; for they think that he spake allegorically when he said that all the fruits of the land had been consumed by the locusts and the chafers. They therefore add, that these locusts, or chafers, or the palmer worms, were the Assyrians, as well as the Persian and the Greeks, that is, Alexander of Macedon and the Romans: but this is wholly a strained view so that there is no need of a long argument; for any one may easily perceive that the Prophet mentions another kind of punishment that he might in every way render the Jews inexcusable who were not roused by judgments so multiplied, but remained still obstinate in their vices. Let us now proceed.

<290108> JOEL 1:8

8. Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth.

8. Plange tanquam puella, accincta sacco, super marito adolescentiae suae.

The Prophet now addresses the whole land. *Lament*, he says; not in an ordinary way, but like a widow, whose husband is dead, whom she had married when young. The love, we know, of a young man towards a young woman, and so of a young woman towards a young man, is more tender than when a person in years marries an elderly woman. This is the reason that the Prophet here mentions the husband of her youth; he wished to set forth the heaviest lamentation, and hence he says “The Jews ought not surely to be otherwise affected by so many calamities, than a widow who has lost her husband while young, and not arrived at maturity, but in the flower of his age.” As then such widows feel bitterly their loss, so the Prophet has adduced their case.

The Hebrews often call a husband בעל *bol*, because he is the lord of his wife and has her under his protection. Literally it is, “For the lord of her youth;” and hence it is, that they also called their idols בעלים *bolim*, as though they were as we have often said in our comment on the Prophet Hosea, their patrons.

The sum of the whole is, That the Jews could not have continued in an unconcerned state, without being void of all reason and discernment; for they were forced, willing or unwilling, to feel a most grievous calamity. It is a monstrous thing, when a widow, losing her husband when yet young, refrains from mourning. Now then, since God had afflicted his land with so many evils, he wished to bring on them, as it were, the grief of widowhood. It follows —

<290109> JOEL 1:9	
9. The meat offering and the drink offering is cut off from the house of the Lord; the priests, the Lord’s ministers, mourn.	9. Succisa est oblatio et libamen e domo Jehovae: luxerunt sacerdotes, ministri Jehovae.

Here, in other words, the Prophet paints the calamity; for, as it has been said, we see how great is the slowness of men to discern God’s judgments; and the Jews, we know, were not more attentive to them than we are now. It was, therefore, needful to prick them with various goads, as the Prophet now does, as though he said, “If ye are not now concerned for want of food, if ye consider not even what the very drunkards are constrained to

feel, who perceive not the evil at a distance, but taste it in their lips — if all these things are of no account with you, do at least look on the temple of God, which is now destitute of its ordinary services; for through the sterility of your fields, through so great a scarcity, neither bread nor wine is offered. Since then ye see that the worship of God has ceased, how is it ye yourselves still remain? Why is it that ye perceive not that God’s fury is kindled against you? For surely except God had been most grievously offended, he would at least have had some regard for his own worship; he would not have suffered his temple to remain without sacrifices.”

The Jews, we know, daily poured their libations, and offered meat-offerings. When, therefore, Joel mentions מְנִיחָה meneche and libation, he doubtless meant to show that the worship of God was nearly abolished. But God would have never permitted such a thing, had he not been grievously offended by the sins of men. Hence the indifference, or rather the stupidity of the people, is more clearly proved, inasmuch as they perceived not the signs of God’s wrath made evident even in the very temple. It follows —

<div> <div><290110></div> <div>JOEL 1:10</div> </div>	
<p>10. The field is wasted, the land mourneth; for the corn is wasted: the new wine is dried up, the oil languisheth.</p>	<p>10. Vastatus est ager, luxit terra (hoc est, luxerunt terrae incolae;) quia vastatum est (idem est verbum vel, quia periit) frumentum, aruit (est a verbo יָבֵשׁ , non a בּוֹשׁ , quod significat pudefacere: quanquam utraque radix significationem hanc admittit apud Hebraeos: quia ergo aruit) mustum et exterminatum est (infirmatum ad verbum, ab אָמַל; sed significat debilitatum esse) oleum.</p>

The Prophet goes on here with the same subject, and uses these many words to give more effect to what he said; for he knew that he addressed the deaf, who, by long habit, had so hardened themselves that God could effect nothing, at least very little, by his word. This is the reason why the Prophet so earnestly presses a subject so evident. Should any one ask what need there was of so many expressions, as it seems to be a needless use of words; I do indeed allow that all that the Prophet wished to say might have been expressed in one sentence, as there is here nothing

intricate: but it was not enough that what he said should be understood, except the Jews applied it to themselves, and perceived that they had to do with God; and to make this application they were not disposed. It is not then without reason that the Prophet labors here, and enforces the same thing in many words.

Hence he says, *The field is wasted, and the land mourns; for the corn has perished, for dried up has the wine, for destroyed has been the oil.* And by these words he intimates that they seeing saw nothing; as though he said, “Let necessity extort mourning from you; ye are indeed starving, all complain of want, all deplore the need of bread and wine; and yet no one of you thinks whence this want is, that it is from the hand of God. Ye feel it in your mouth, ye feel it in your palate, ye feel it in your throat, ye feel it in your stomach; but ye feel it not in your heart.” In short, the Prophet intimates that the Jews were void of right understanding; they indeed deplored their famine, but they were like brute beasts, who, when hungry, show signs of impatience. So the Jews mourned, because their stomach disquieted them; but they knew not that the cause of their want and famine was their sins. It afterwards follows —

<div><290111> JOEL 1:11</div>	
11. Be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen; howl, O ye vinedressers, for the wheat and for the barley; because the harvest of the field is perished.	11. Erubescite agricolae, ululate vinitores super tritico et hordeo; quia periit messis agri.

The Prophet says nothing new here, but only strengthens what he had said before, and is not wordy without reason; for he intends here not merely to teach, but also to produce an effect: And this is the design of heavenly teaching; for God not only wishes that what he says may be understood, but intends also to penetrate into our hearts: and the word of God, we know, consists not of doctrine only, but also of exhortations, and threatenings, and reproofs. This plan then the Prophet now pursues: *Ye husband men*, he says, *be ashamed, and ye vinedressers, howl; for perished has the harvest of the field.* The sum of the whole is, that the Jews, as we have already said, could by no excuse cover their indifference;

for their clamor was everywhere heard, their complaints everywhere resounded, that the land had become a waste, that they were themselves famished that they were afflicted with many calamities; and yet no one acknowledged that God, who visited them for their sins, was the author. But what remains I shall put off until to-morrow.

PRAYER

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou invites us daily by various means to repentance, and continues also to urge us, because thou sees our extreme tardiness, — O grant that we may at length be awakened from our indifference, and suffer us not to be inebriated by the charms of Satan and the world; but by thy Spirit rouse us to real groaning, that, being ashamed of ourselves, we may flee to thy mercy, and doubt not but that thou wilt be propitious to us, provided with a sincere heart we call on thee, and seek that reconciliation which thou daily offerest to us by thy Gospel in the name of thy only begotten Son. Amen.

<290112> JOEL 1:12

12. The vine is dried up, and the fig tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field, are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men.

12. Vitis exaruit, et ficulnea infirmata est (vel, periit;) malogranatum, etiam palma et malus, omnes arbores exaruerunt: certe exaruit gaudium a filiis hominum.

LECTURE FORTIETH

The Prophet now concludes his subjects which was, that as God executed judgments so severe on the people, it was a wonder that they remained stupefied, when thus reduces to extremities. *The vine*, he says, *has dried up*, and every kind of fruit; he adds the *fig-tree*, afterwards the רמון *remun*, the *pomegranate*, (for so they render it,) *the palm, the apple-tree*³, and all trees. And this sterility was a clear sign of God's wrath; and it would have been so regarded, had not men either wholly deceived themselves, or had become hardened against all punishments. Now this ἀναίσθησία (insensibility) is as it were the very summit of evils; that is, when men feel not their own calamities, or at least understand not that they are inflicted by the hand of God. Let us now proceed —

<290113> JOEL 1:13-15	
13. Gird yourselves, and lament, ye priests: howl, ye ministers of the altar: come, lie all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God: for the meat offering and the drink offering is withholden from the house of your God.	13. Accingimini et plangete sacerdotes; ululate, ministri altaris; venite, pernoctate cum saccis, ministri Dei mei: quia prohibita est a domo Dei vestri oblatio et libamen.
14. Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the LORD your God, and cry unto the LORD,	14. Sactificate jejunium, vocate coetum, congregare senes, omnes incoles terrae, in domum Jehovae Dei vestri, et clamate ad Jehovam,
15. Alas for the day! for the day of the LORD is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come.	15. Heus Diem! Quia propinquus est dies Jehovae, et tanquam vastitas ab Omnipotente veniet.

Now the Prophet begins to exhort the people to repentance. Having represented them as grievously afflicted by the hand of God, he now adds that a remedy was at hand, provided they solicited the favor of God; and

at the same time he denounces a more grievous punishment in future; for it would not have been enough that they had been reminded of their calamities and evils, except they also feared in time to come. Hence the Prophet, that he might the more move them, says, that the hand of God was still stretched out, and that there was something worse nigh at hand, except they of themselves anticipated it. This is the purport of the whole. I now come to the words.

Be girded, lament and howl, he says, *ye priests, the ministers of the altar*. The verb חָגַר *chegeru* may be explained in two ways. Some understand it thus “Gird yourselves *with sackcloth*,” for shortly after he says *with sackcloth*, or *in sackcloth*. But we may take it as simply meaning, *gird yourselves*, that is, *Hasten*; for this metaphorical expression often occurs. As to the drift of the passage, there is but little difference, whether we read, “Gird yourselves with sackcloth,” or, “Hasten.” And he addresses the priests, though a common and general exhortation to the whole people afterwards follows. But as God made them the leaders of his people, it behoved them to afford others an example. It is the common duty of all the godly to pray for and to further the salvation of their brethren; but it is a duty especially enjoined on the ministers of the word and on pastors. So also, when God calls those to repentance who preside over others, they ought to lead the way, and for two reasons; — first, because they have not been in vain chosen by the Lord for this end, that they might outshine others, and be as luminaries; — secondly, because they who bear any public office ought to feel a double guilty when the Lord visits public sins with judgment. Private men indeed sin; but in pastors there is the blame of negligence, and still more, When they deviate even the least from the right way, a greater offense is given. Rightly then does the Prophet begin with the priests, when he bids the whole people to repent. And he not only bids them to put on sackcloth, but commands them also, as we shall see, to proclaim a fast, and then to call an assembly: *ye priests*, he says, *be girded, and put on sackcloth, wail, howl, and pass the night in sackcloth*; and then he calls them *the ministers of the altar* and the *ministers of God*, but in a different sense; for the Prophet does not substitute the altar for God, as he would thus have formed an idol; but they are called the ministers of the altar, because they offered there sacrifices to God. They are indeed with strict propriety the ministers of God; but as the priests, when they sacrificed, stood in the presence of God, and as the altar was to them as it

were the way of access to him, they are called the ministers of the altar. He calls them, at the same time, the ministers of God, and, as it has been stated, they are properly so called.

But he says here **אלהי** *alei* (my God.) The *iod*, my, is by some omitted, as if it were a servile letter, but redundant. I, however, doubt not but that the Prophet here mentions Him as his God; for he thus intended to claim more authority for his doctrine. His concern or his contest was with the whole people; and they, no doubt, in their usual ways proudly opposed against him the name of God as their shield. “What! are we not the very people of God?” Hence the Prophet, in order to prove this presumption false, sets forth God as being on his side. He therefore says, ‘The ministers of *my* God.’ Had any one objected and said, that he was in common the God of the whole people, the Prophet had a ready answer, — “I am specially sent by Him, and sustain his person, and plead the cause which he has committed to me: He is then my God and not yours.” We now then see the Prophet’s meaning in this expression. He now adds, *for cut off is offering and libation from the house of our God*. He confesses Him at the same time to be their God with reference to the priesthood; for nothing, we know, was presumptuously invented by the Jews, as the temple was built by Godly command, and sacrifices were offered according to the rule of the law. He then ascribes to the priesthood this honor, that God ruled in the temple; for God, as we have already said, approved of that worship as having proceeded from his word: and to this purpose is that saying of Christ, ‘We know what we worship.’ But yet the priests did not rightly worship God; for though their external rites were according to the command of God, yet as their hearts were polluted, it is certain that whatever they did was repudiated by God, until, being touched with the fear of his judgment, they fled to his mercy, as the Prophet now exhorts them to do.

He afterwards adds, *sanctify a fast, call an assembly, gather the old, all the inhabitants of the land*. **קדש** *kodash* means to sanctify and to prepare; but I have retained its proper meaning, *sanctify a fast*; for the command had regard to the end, that is, sanctification. Then a *fast proclaim* — for what purpose? That the people might purge themselves from all their pollutions, and present themselves pure and clean before God. *Call an assembly*. It appears that there was a solemn convocation whenever a fast was proclaimed among the people: for it was not enough for each one

privately at home to abstain from food, except all confessed openly, with one mouth and one consent, that they were guilty before God. Hence with a fast was connected a solemn profession of repentance. The uses and ends of a fast, we know, are various: but when the Prophet here speaks of a solemn fast, he doubtless bids the people to come to it suppliantly, as the guilty are wont to do, who would deprecate punishment before a judge, that they may obtain mercy from him. In the second chapter there will be much to say on fasting: I only wish now briefly to touch on the subject.

He afterwards bids *the old to be gathered*, and then adds, *All the inhabitants of the land*. But he begins with the old, and justly so, for the guilt of the old is always the heaviest. But this word relates not to age as in a former instance. When he said yesterday, ‘Hear ye, the aged,’ he addressed those who by long experience had learnt in the world many things unknown to the young or to men of middle age. But now the Prophet means by the old those to whom was intrusted the public government; and as through their slothfulness they had suffered the worship of God and all integrity to fall into decay, rightly does the Prophet wish them to be leaders and precursors to the people in their confession of repentance; and further, it behaved them, on account of their office, as we have said of the priests, to lead the way. Joel at the same time shows that the whole people were implicated in guilt, so that none could be excepted, for he bids them all to come with the elders.

Call them, he says, *to the house of Jehovah your God, and cry ye to Jehovah*. We hence learn why he had spoken of fasting and of sackcloth, even that they might humbly deprecate God’s wrath; for fasting of itself would have been useless, and to put on sackcloth, we know, is in itself but an empty sign: but prayer is what the Prophet sets here in the highest rank, and fasting is only an appendage, and so is sackcloth. Whosoever then puts on sackcloth and withholds prayer, is guilty of mockery; and no one can derive any good from mere fasting; but when fasting and sackcloth are added to prayer, and are as it were handmaids, then they are not uselessly practiced. We may then observe, that the end of fasting and sackcloth was no other, than that the priests together with the whole people, might present themselves suppliantly before God, and confess themselves worthy of destruction, and that they had no hope except from his gratuitous mercy. This is the meaning.

It now follows, *Alas the day! for nigh is the day of Jehovah.* Here the Prophet, as it was at first stated, threatens something worse in future than what they had experienced. He has hitherto been showing their torpidity; now he declares that they had not yet suffered all their punishments, but that there was something worse to be feared, except they turned seasonably to God. And he now exclaims, as though the day of Jehovah was before his eyes, and he calls it the day of Jehovah, because in that day God would stretch-forth his hand to execute judgment; for while he tolerates men or bears with their sins, he seems not to rule in the world. And though this mode of speaking is common enough in Scripture, it ought yet to be carefully noticed; for all seem not to understand that God calls that his own day, when he will openly shine forth and appear as the judge of the world: but as long as he spares us, his face seems to be hidden from us; yea, he seems not to govern the world. The Prophet therefore declares here that the day of the Lord was at hand; for it cannot be, but that the Lord must at length rise up and ascend his throne to punish men, though for a time he may connive at them. But the interjection, expressive of grief, intimates that the judgment, of which the Prophet speaks, was not to be despised, for it would be dreadful; and he wished to strike terror into the Jews, for they were too secure. And he says, *The day is nigh*, that they might not procrastinate, as they were wont to do, from day to day: for though men be touched by God's judgments they yet even desire time to be prolonged to them, and they come very tardily to God. Hence the Prophet, that he might correct this their great slothfulness, says that the day was nigh.

He adds, כָּשֶׁד מִשְׁדִּי יָבוֹא *kashed meshadi ibu* 'as a desolation from the Almighty will it come.' The word מִשְׁדִּי *shadi* signifies a conqueror; but it proceeds from the verb שָׁדַד *shadad*; and this in Hebrew means "to desolate," or "to destroy." The powerful and the conqueror is called מִשְׁדִּי *shadi*; and hence they call God מִשְׁדִּי *shadi*, on account of his power. Some derive it from udder: then they call God מִשְׁדִּי *shadi* as though Scripture gave him this name, because from him flows all abundance of good things as from a fountain. But I rather refer this name to his strength and power, for the Jews, we know, gloried in the name of God as one armed to defend their safety. Whenever then the Prophets said that God was מִשְׁדִּי *shadi*, the people laid hold on this as a ground for false confidence, "God is

almighty, we are then secure from all evils.” But yet this confidence was not founded on the promises: and it was, we know, an absurd and profane presumption to have thus abused the name of God. Since then the Jews foolishly pricked themselves on this, that God had adopted them for his people, the prophet says here, “There will come a desolation from the Almighty;” that is, “God is Almighty, but ye are greatly deceived in thinking that your safety is secured by his power; for he will, on the contrary, be opposed to you, inasmuch as ye have provoked his wrath.” It follows —

<290116> JOEL 1:16-17	
16. Is not the meat cut off before our eyes, yea, joy and gladness from the house of our God?	16. An non coram oculis nostris cibus excisus est? e domo Dei nostri gaudium et exultatio?
17. The seed is rotten under their clods, the garners are laid desolate, the barns are broken down; for the corn is withered.	17. Putrefacta sunt grana subtus sulcos suos, desolata sunt reconditoria (vel, apothecae desolatae sunt,) diruta sunt horrea, quia exaruit frumentum.

He repeats the same thing as before, for he reproaches the Jews for being so slow to consider that the hand of God was against them. *Has not the meat*, he says, *been cut off before our eyes? joy and exultation from the house of our God?* Here he chides the madness of the Jews, that they perceived not things set before their eyes. He therefore says that they were blind in the midst of light, and that their sight was such, that seeing they saw nothing: they surely ought to have felt distressed, when want reached the temple. For since God had commanded the first-fruits to be offered to him, the temple ought not by any means to have been without its sacrifices; and though mortals perish a hundred times through famine and want, yet God ought not to be defrauded of his right. When, therefore, there was now no offering nor libation, how great was the stupidity of the people not to feel this curse, which ought to have wounded them more than if they had been consumed a hundred times by famine? We see then the design of the Prophet’s words, that is, to condemn the Jews for their stupidity; for they considered not that a most grievous judgment was brought on them, when the temple was deprived of its usual sacrifices.

He afterwards adds, that *joy and gladness* were taken away: for God commanded the Jews to come to the temple to give thanks and to acknowledge themselves blessed, because he had chosen his habitation among them. Hence this expression is so often repeated by Moses, ‘Thou shalt rejoice before thy God;’ for by saying this, God intended to encourage the people the more to come cheerfully to the temple; as though he said, “I certainly want not your presence, but I wish by my presence to make you glad.” But now when the worship of God ceased, the Prophet says, that joy had been also abolished; for the Jews could not cheerfully give thanks to God when his curse was before their eyes, when they saw that he was their adversary, and also when they were deprived of the ordinances of religion. We now then perceive why the Prophet joins joy and gladness with oblations: they were the symbols of thanksgiving.

He shows the cause of the evil, *Rotted have the grains in the very furrows.* For they call seeds פֶּרֶדוּת *peredut* from the act of scattering. He then calls grains by this name, because they are scattered; and he says that they rotted in the fields when they ought to have germinated. He then adds, *The granaries halve become desolated and the barns have been pulled down;* for there was no use for them. Hence we conclude, that sterility had become most grievous and perpetual; for if the people had been only afflicted by famine for a few harvests or for one year, the Prophet would not have spoken thus. The famine must then have been, as it has been already stated for a long time. Let us now proceed —

<div>290118</div> JOEL 1:18	
18. How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate.	18. Quomodo ingemuit bestia? Confusa sunt armenta boum? Quia desunt illis pascua: etiam greges ovium desolati sunt.

The Prophet amplifies his reproof, that even oxen as well as other animals felt the judgment of God. There is then here an implied comparison between the feeling of brute animals and the insensibility of the people, as though he said, “There is certainly more intelligence and reason in oxen and other brute animals than in you; for the herds groan, the flocks groan, but ye remain stupid and confounded. What does this mean?” We then see that

the Prophet here compares the stupidity of the people with the feeling of animals, to make them more ashamed.

How, he says, *has the beast groaned?* The question serves to show vehemence; for if he had said in the form of a narrative, that the animals groaned, that the cattle were confounded, and that the flocks perished, the Jews would have been less affected; but when he exclaims and, moved with astonishment, speaks interrogatively, How does the beast groan? he, no doubt, wished to produce an effect on the Jews, that they might perceive the judgment of God, which they had before passed by with their eyes closed, though it was quite manifest. It follows —

<290119> JOEL 1:19-20	
19. O LORD, to thee will I cry: for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and the flame hath burned all the trees of the field.	19. Ad te Jehovam clamabo, quia ignis consumpsit pascua (vel, habitacula) deserti: et flamma accendit omnes arbores agri.
20. And the beasts of the field cry also unto thee: for the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness.	20. Etiam bestiae agri clamabunt ad te (quanquam עֵרָגָה proprium est cervi, ut dicunt grammatici, sicuti etiam Psalmo 42 habetur: est illic idem verbum: clamabunt igitur bestiae ad te,) quia aruerunt decursus aquarum, quia ignis consumpsit habitacula (vel, pascua) deserti.

When the Prophet saw that he succeeded less than he expected, leaving the people, he speaks of what he would do himself, *I will cry to thee, Jehovah.* He had before bidden others to cry, and why does he not now press the same thing? Because he saw that the Jews were so deaf and listless as to make no account of all his exhortations: he therefore says, “*I will cry to thee, Jehovah;* for they are touched neither by shame nor by fear. Since they throw aside every regard for their own safety, since they account as nothing my exhortations I will leave them, and will cry to thee;” which means this, — “I see, Lord, that all these calamities proceed from thy

hand; I will not howl as profane men do, but I will ascribe them to thee; for I perceive thee to be acting as a judge in all the evils which we suffer.” Having then before declared that the Jews were more tardy than brute animals and having reproached them for feeling less acutely than oxen and sheep, the Prophet now says, that though they all remained obstinate, he would yet do what a pious man and a worshipper of God ought to do, *I will cry to thee* — Why? Because the *fire has consumed the pastures, or the dwellings, of the wilderness.*

He here again gives an awful record of God’s judgments. Though the heat may burn up whole regions, yet we know that pasture-lands do not soon wither, especially on mountains; and of such cold pastures he speaks here. We know that however great may be the fertility of mountains, yet coolness prevails there, and that, in the greatest drought, the mountainous regions are ever green. But the Prophet tells us here of an unusual thing, that the dwellings of the wilderness were burnt up. Some render נאות *naut* pastures; others, dwellings: but as to the meaning, we may read either; for the Prophet refers here to cold and humid regions, which never want moisture in the greatest heats. Some render the word, the beautiful or fair spots of the wilderness, but improperly. He doubtless means pastures, or dwellings, or folds. *The fire then has consumed the dwellings, or pastures of the wilderness.* This was not usual; it did not happen according to the ordinary course of nature: it then follows that it was a miracle. This is the reason why the Prophet says, that it was now time to cry to God; for it did not appear to be fortuitous, that the heat had burnt up regions which were moist and well watered. *The flame, he says hath burnt up all the trees of the field.*

He afterwards adds *The beasts of the field will also cry* (for the verb is in the plural number;) the beasts then will cry. The Prophet expresses here more clearly what he had said before that though the brute animals were void of reasons they yet felt God’s judgment, so that they constrained men by their example to feel ashamed, for they cried to God: *the beasts then of the field cry.* He ascribes crying to them, as it is elsewhere ascribed to the young ravens. The young ravens, properly speaking, do not indeed call on God; and yet the Psalmist says so, and that, because they confess, by raising up their bills, that there is no supply for their want except God supports them. So also the Prophet mentions here the beasts as crying to God. It is indeed a figure of speech, called personification; for this could

not be properly said of beasts. But when the beasts made a noise under the pressure of famine, was it not such a calling on God as their nature admitted? As much then as the nature of brute animals allows, they may be said to seek their food from the Lord, when they send forth lamentable cries and noises, and show that they are oppressed with famine and want. When, therefore, the Prophet attributes crying to beasts, he at the same time reproaches the Jews with their stupidity, that they did not call on God. “What do you mean,” he says. “See the brute animals; they show to you what ought to be done; it is at least a teaching that ought to have effect on you. If I and the other prophets have lost all our labor, if God has in vain performed the office of a teacher among you, let the very oxen at least be your teachers; to whom indeed it is a shame to be disciples, but it is a greater shame not to attend to what they teach you; for the oxen by their example lead you to God.”

We now perceive how much vehemence there is in the Prophet’s words, when he says, Even the beasts of the field will cry to God; *for the streams of waters have dried up, and the fire has consumed the dwellings, or the pastures of the wilderness.* He again teaches what I have lately stated, that sterility proceeded from the evident judgment of God, and that it ought to have struck dread into men, for it was a sort of miracle. When, therefore the courses of waters dried up on the mountains, how could it be deemed natural? אֶפְיִקִּים *aphikim* mean courses of waters or valleys through which the waters run. The Prophet here refers, no doubt, to those regions which, through the abundance of water, always retain their fertility. When, therefore, the very valleys were burnt up, they ought surely to own that something wonderful had happened. On this account, he ascribes crying to herds and brute animals, and not any sort of crying, but that by which they called on God. What remains we shall defer till to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou sees us to be surrounded with the infirmity of our flesh, and so held by, and, as it were, overwhelmed with, earthly cares, that we can hardly raise up our hearts and minds to thee, — O grant, that being awaked by thy word and daily warnings, we may at length feel our evils, and that we may not only learn by the stripes thou inflicttest on us, but also of our own accord, summon ourselves to judgment, and examine

our hearts, and thus come to thy presence, being our own judges; so that we may anticipate thy displeasure, and thus obtain that mercy which thou best promised to all, who, turning only to thee, deprecate thy wrath, and also hope for thy favor, through the name of one Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

LECTURE FORTY-FIRST

<290201> JOEL 2:1-11

1. Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand;

1. Clangite tuba in Sion, et clamate (alii vertunt, tantarizate: sed est generale verbum: clamate igitur, vel, clamorem odite) in monte sancto meo: contremiscant omnes incolae terrae, quia venit dies Jehovae, quia propinquus est.

2. A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations.

2. Dies tenebrarum et caliginis, dies nubis et obscuritatis, sicut aurora expanditur super montes, populus magnus et robustus (vel, terribilis;) similis ei non fuit a seculo, et post eum, non addet (hoc est, non erit amplius) ad annos generationis et generationis (ego cogor uno contextu legere haec omnia; dicam postea suo loco rationem.)

3. A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them.

3. Coram facie ejus (coram ipso) devorans ignis, et post eum exuret flamma: sicut hortus Eden terra coram ipso (ante faciem ejus ad verbum;) et post eum desertum solitudinis (vel, vastitatis;) adeoque evasio non erit ei.

4. The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run.

4. Quasi aspectus equorum aspectus ejus, et tanquam equites current.

<p>5. Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battle array.</p>	<p>5. Sicut vocem quadrigarum (sic מרכבות interpretes vertunt: postea dicam de hoc verbo,) super cacumina montium saltabunt, secundum vocem flammae ignis vorantis stipulam, quasi populus robustus (vel, terribilis) paratus ad proelium.</p>
<p>6. Before their face the people shall be much pained: all faces shall gather blackness.</p>	<p>6. A facie ejus pavebunt populi, omnes facies colligent nigredinem.</p>
<p>7. They shall run like mighty men; they shall climb the wall like men of war; and they shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks:</p>	<p>7. Quasi gigantes (vel, fortes) discurrent, sicut viri proelii ascendent murum, et vir (hoc est, quisque in viis suis ambulabit, et non tardabunt gressus suos (alii, non inquirent de viis suis.)</p>
<p>8. Neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk every one in his path: and when they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded.</p>	<p>8. Vir fratrem suum (hoc est, quisque socium suum) non premet, quisque in viis suis ambulabit: usque in gladium cadent (hoc est, super gladium cadent) non vulnerabuntur (alii, non concupiscent.)</p>
<p>9. They shall run to and fro in the city; they shall run upon the wall, they shall climb up upon the houses; they shall enter in at the windows like a thief.</p>	<p>9. Per urbem gradientur, per murum discurrent, in domos ascendent, usque ad fenestras intrabunt tanquam fur.</p>
<p>10. The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining:</p>	<p>10. Coram eo contremiscet terra, et angentur coeli; sol et luna nigrescent, et stellae retrahent splendorem suum.</p>
<p>11. And the Lord shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?</p>	<p>11. Et Jehova edet vocem suam coram exercitu suo, quia magna valde castra ejus: quia robustus qui facit (vel, exequitur) verbum ejus; quia magnus dies Jehovae, et terribilis valde, et quis sustinebit eum?</p>

This chapter contains serious exhortations, mixed with threatening; but the Prophet threatens for the purpose of correcting the indifference of the people, whom we have seen to have been very tardy to consider God's judgments. Now the reason why I wished to join together these eleven verses was, because the design of the Prophet in them is no other than to stir up by fear the minds of the people. The object of the narrative then is, to make the people sensible, that it was now no time for taking rest; for the Lord, having long tolerated their wickedness, was now resolved to pour upon them in full torrent his whole fiery. This is the sum of the whole. Let us now come to the words.

Sound the trumpet, he says, *in Zion; cry out in my holy mountain; let all the inhabitants of the earth tremble*. The Prophet begins with an exhortation. We know, indeed that he alludes to the usual custom sanctioned by the law; for as on festivals trumpets were sounded to call the people, so also it was done when anything extraordinary happened. Hence the Prophet addresses not each individually; but as all had done wickedly, from the least to the greatest, he bids the whole assembly to be called, that they might in common own themselves to be guilty before God, and deprecate his vengeance. It is the same as though the Prophet had said that there was no one among the people who could exempt himself from blame, for iniquity had prevailed through the whole body. But this passage shows that when any judgment of God is impending, and tokens of it appear, this remedy ought to be used, namely, that all must publicly assemble and confess themselves worthy of punishments and at the same time flee to the mercy of God. This, we know, was, as I have already said, formerly enjoined on the people; and this practice has not been abolished by the gospel. And it hence appears how much we have departed from the right and lawful order of things; for at this day it would be new and unusual to proclaim a fast. How so? Because the greater part are become hardened; and as they know not commonly what repentance is, so they understand not what the profession of repentance means; for they understand not what sin is, what the wrath of God is, what grace is. It is then no wonder that they are so secure, and that when praying for pardon is mentioned, it is a thing wholly unknown at this day. But though people in general are thus stupid, it is yet our duty to learn from the Prophets what has always been the actual mode of proceeding among the people of God, and to labor

as much as we can, that this may be known, so that when there shall come an occasion for a public repentance, even the most ignorant may understand that this practice has ever prevailed in the Church of God, and that it did not prevail through inconsiderate zeal of men, but through the will of God himself.

But he bids *the inhabitants of the land to tremble*. By these words he intimates, that we are not to trifle with God by vain ceremonies but to deal with him in earnest. When therefore, the trumpets sound, our hearts ought to tremble; and thus the reality is to be connected with the outward signs. And this ought to be carefully noticed; for the world is ever disposed to have an eye to some outward service, and thinks that a satisfaction is given to God, when some external rite is observed. But we do nothing but mock God, when we present him with ceremonies, while there is no corresponding sincere feeling in the heart; and this is what we shall find handled in another place.

The Prophet now adds threatening, that he might stir up the minds of the people: *For coming*, he says, *is the day of Jehovah for nigh it is*. By these words he first intimates that we are not to wait until God strikes us, but that as soon as he shows signs of his wrath, we ought to anticipate his judgment. When God then warns us of his displeasure, we ought instantly to solicit pardon: nigh, he says, is the day of Jehovah. What follows has a regard to the end which we have mentioned; for the Prophet paints the terrible judgment of God with the view of rousing minds wholly stupid and indifferent.

And then he says, *A day of darkness and of thick darkness, a day of clouds and of obscurity, as the dawn which expands over the mountains*. By calling it a dark and gloomy day, he wished to show that there would be no hope of deliverance; for, according to the common usage of Scripture, we know that by light is designated a cheerful and happy state, or the hope of deliverance from any affliction: but the Prophet now extinguishes, as it were, every hope in this world, when he declares that the day of Jehovah would be dark, that is, without hope of restoration. This is his meaning. When he says afterwards, *As the dawn which expands*, etc., he mentions this to signify the celerity with which it would come; for we know how sudden is the rising of the dawn on the mountains: the dawn spreads in a moment on the mountains, where darkness was before. For the light

penetrates not immediately either into valleys or even into plains; but if any one looks at the summits of mountains, he will see that the dawn rises quickly. It is then the settle as though the Prophet said, “The day of the Lord is nigh, for the Lord can suddenly stretch forth his hand, as the dawn spreads over the mountains.”

He then mentions its character, *A people great and strong to whom there has not been the like from the beginning, or from ages and after whom there will be no more the like, to the years of a generation and a generation.* Here the Prophet specifies the kind of judgment that would be, of which he had generally spoken before; and he shows that what he had hitherto recorded of God’s vengeance ought not to be so understood as that God would descend openly and visibly from heaven, but that the Assyrians would be the ministers and executioners of his vengeance. In short, the Prophet shows here that the coming of that people ought to have been as much dreaded as if God had put forth his hand and executed on his people the vengeance deserved by their sins. And by these words he teaches us, that men gain nothing by being blind to the judgments of God; for God will notwithstanding execute his works and use the instrumentality of men; for men are the scourges by which he chastises his own people. The Chaldeans and the Assyrians were unbelievers; yet God used them for the purpose of correcting the Jews. this the Prophet now shows, that is, that God was the avenger in these very Assyrians, for he employed them as the ministers and executioners of his judgment. We see at the same time that the Prophet describes here the terrible wrath of God to shake off from the Jews their tardiness; for he saw that they were not moved by all his threatening, and ever laid hold on some new flattering pretenses. This is the reason why he gives such a long description.

Before them, he says, the fire will devour, and after them the flame will burn. He means that the vengeance of God would be such as would consume the whole people: for God has in various ways begun to chastise the people, but, as we have seen, without any advantage. The Prophet then says here that the last stroke remained, and that the Lord would wholly destroy men so refractory, and whom he could not hitherto restore to a sound mind by moderate punishments. For he had in a measure spared them, though he had treated them sharply and severely, and given them time to repent. Hence, when the Prophet saw that they were wholly

irreclaimable, he says, that it now only remained that the Lord should at once utterly consume them.

He adds, *As the garden of Eden the land is before them, and after them it is the land of solitude; and so* (and also) *there will be no escape from them.*

Here the Prophet warns the Jews, that though they inhabited a most pleasant country and one especially fruitful, there was no reason for them to flatter themselves, for God could convert the fairest lands into a waste. He therefore compares Judea to the garden of Eden or to Paradise. But such also was the state of Sodom, as Moses shows. What did it avail the Sodomites that they dwelt as in Paradise, that they inhabited a rich and fertile land, and thought themselves to be nourished as in the bosom of God? So also now the Prophet says, “Though the land is like Paradise, yet when the enemy shall march through it, a universal waste shall follow, a scattering shall everywhere follow, there shall be no cultivation, no pleasantness, no appearance of inhabited land, for the enemy will destroy every thing.” His purpose was to prevent the Jews, by confiding in God’s blessing, which they had hitherto experienced, from heedlessly disregarding in future his vengeance; for his wrath would in a moment consume and devour whatever fruitfulness the land had hitherto possessed. This is the meaning. He therefore concludes that there would be no escape from these enemies, the Assyrians, because they would come armed with a command to reduce to nothing the whole land.

He afterwards adds many similitudes, which any one of himself can sufficiently understand: I shall not therefore be long in explaining them, and many words would be superfluous. *As the appearance of horses their appearance, and as horsemen, so will they run.* This verse sets forth again the suddenness of vengeance, as though the Prophet had said, that long distance would be no obstacle, for the Assyrians would quickly move and occupy Judea; for distance deceived the Jews, and they thought that there would be a long respite to them. Hence the Prophet here removes this vain confidence, when he says that they would be like horses and horsemen. He then adds, *Like the sound of chariots.* They expound מרכבות *merecabut*, chariots, though the Hebrews rather think them to be harnesses or saddles as we call them; but yet I prefer to view them as chariots; for what the Prophet says, that they *shall leap on the tops of mountains* like the sound of chariots, would not be suitably applied to the trappings of horses. They then shall leap on tops of mountains — but how? as chariots, that is, they

shall come with great force, or make a great and terrible noise. And he speaks of the tops of mountains for there we know the noise is greater when there is any commotion. The Prophet, therefore, does in every way amplify God's vengeance, that he might awaken the Jews, who by their indifference had too long provoked the Lord's wrath.

Like the sound, he says, of the flame of fire, or of a fiery flame, devouring the stubble. He compares the Assyrians to a flame, which consumes all things; and he compares the Jews to stubble, though they thought themselves fortified by many forces and strongholds.

At length he adds, *As a strong people, prepared for battle; their face the people will dread, and all faces shall gather blackness.* By these words the Prophet intimates that the Assyrians at their coming would be supplied with such power as would, by report only, lay prostrate all people. But if the Assyrians should be so formidable to all people, what could the Jews do? In short, the Prophet here shows that the Jews would by no means be able to resist enemies so powerful; for they would by their fame alone so lay prostrate all people, that none would dare to rise up against them. He then compares them to giants. *As giants,* he says, *they will run here and there; as men of war they will climb the wall, and man (that is, every one) in his ways shall walk.* The Prophet heaps together these various expressions, that the Jews might know that they had to do with the irresistible hand of God, and that they would in vain implore assistance here and there; for they could find no relief in the whole world, when God executed his vengeance in so formidable a manner. He says further, *they shall not stop their goings,* though some render the words, "They shall not inquire respecting their ways;" for he had said before, "They shall proceed in their ways:" then the meaning is, They shall not come like strangers, who, when they journey through unknown regions, make anxious inquiries, whether any be lying in wait, whether there be any turnings in the road, whether the ways be difficult and perplexed: *They shall not inquire,* he says; they shall securely proceed, as though the road was open to them, as though the whole country was known to them. This part also serves to show celerity, that the Jews might dread the vengeance of God the same as if it was quite nigh them.

He then adds, *A man shall not push his brother.* By this mode of speaking the Prophet means that they would come in perfect order, so that the

multitude would create no confusion, as it is mostly the case: for it is very difficult for an army to march in regular order without tumult, like two or three men walking together. For when a hundred horsemen march together some commonly hinder others. When therefore so large a number assemble together, it can hardly be possible for them not to retard and impede one another. But the Prophet declares that this would not be the case with the Assyrians, for the Lord would direct their goings. Though then the Lord would bring so large a multitude, it would yet be so well arranged and in such order, that no one would push his companion, or be any hindrance to him. A *man*, he says, shall in his way proceed, even without any impediment.

And on swords they shall fall, and shall not be wounded: that is, they shall not only be strong men of war, so that they shall intrepidly face every kind of danger; but they shall also escape unhurt from all weapons; though they may rush on swords like madmen and show no care for themselves, they shall not yet be wounded. But this may be taken in a still simpler way, “They shall not be wounded” that is, as if they could not be wounded. And it seems to me to be the genuine sense of the Prophet, that they would not entertain any fear of death, so as cautiously to attack their enemies, but would with impunity provoke death itself by casting themselves on the very swords: they would not then fear any wound, but dare to face swords as if they were wholly harmless to them. Some render the word, “they shall not covet;” and then the word means as if the Prophet had said, that they would not be covetous of money. But this meaning can hardly suit this place; and we see that the best sense seems to be, that they would heedlessly rush on swords, as though they could not be wounded.

It afterwards follows, *Through the city shall they march; over the wall shall they run here and there; into houses shall they climb; through the windows shall they enter like a thief.* The Prophet here shows that the Jews in vain trusted in their fortified cities, for the enemies would easily penetrate into them. They shall march, he says, through the city, that is, as though there were no gates to it. The meaning then is, that though Judea abounded in cities, which seemed impregnable and appeared sufficient to arrest the course of enemies, as it had happened almost always, so that great armies were forced to desist when any strong fortified city stood in their way; yet the Prophet says that cities would be no impediment to the

Assyrians at their coming to Judea, for they would march through the city, as along a plain road, where no gates are closed against them. They shall then march through the midst of cities as through a plain or open fields. To the same purpose is what follows, They shall run here and there over the wall, he says. These are indeed hyperbolic words; yet, when we consider how slow men are to fear punishment, we must allow that the Prophet in these expressions does not exceed moderation. They shall then run up and down through the city; that is, “In vain you expect that there will be to you any rest or quietness, for ye think that you sili be able for a time to sustain the onsets of your enemies: This,” he says, “will by no means be the case, for they shall run here and there over the wall, as though it were a plain. Besides, *they shall climb into the houses, and enter in through the windows, and do this as a thief*; that is, though there should be no hostile attack, yet they shall stealthily and secretly penetrate into your houses: when there will be a great tumult, when the whole regions shall meet in arms, and when ye will think yourselves able to resist, they will then as thieves quietly enter into your houses and come in through the windows, and ye shall not be able to close up the passage against them.”

Then he adds, *Before their face shall the earth tremble, and in anguish shall be the heavens; the sun and the moon shall become dark, and the stars shall withdraw their brightness*. The Prophet speaks here more hyperbolically; but we must ever remember that he addressed men extremely stupid: it then behoved him to speak in an unusual manner, that he might touch their feelings; for it avails nothing to speak in all ordinary way to perverse men, especially to those who have divested themselves of all shame, and whom Satan has fascinated, so that they fear nothing and grieve at nothing. When therefore each stupidity lays hold on the minds of men, God must thunder that his word may be heard. As then the listlessness of the people was monstrous, so it was necessary, so to speak, for the Prophet to utter monstrous words. This is the reason why he now says, *Before their face* (namely, that of the enemies) *shall the land tremble*; and then he adds, *The heavens also shall be in anguish*; not that the heavens would fear the Assyrians; but the Prophet intimates that such would be the vengeance, that it would terrify the whole world; and this he intimates, that the Jews might cease to expect any subterfuges, for they flattered themselves, as though they could fly on the clouds, or could find for themselves some hiding-places or some corners at a distance. The

Prophet gives them to understand that the whole world would be full of horror, when the Lord would come furnished with his army. He speaks also of *the sun and the moon*; as though he said, “There will be no more any hope of aid from created things; for the vital light itself shall fail, when the Lord shall pour forth the flood of his fury: *The sun and the moon*, he says, *shall become dark; and the stars shall withhold their brightness*. Though then ye lift up your eyes, not even a spark of light will there be to comfort you, for darkness on every side will cover you; and ye shall know by heaven as well as by earth that God is angry with you. Here, in short, he shuts up against the Jews every avenue to hope; for not only the Assyrian will rage on earth, but God will also give signs of vengeance from heaven, so that the sun will be constrained to show such a sign, as well as the moon and all the stars.

He at last adds, *And Jehovah will utter his voice before his army*. The Prophet seems in this verse to anticipate whatever objection men might adduce. “O! thou denounces on us great terrors, and as if the Assyrians were not to be counted as men, as if no other people were in the world, as if there was no other army, as if there were no other forces, as if none else had courage; but if the Assyrians are at this day formidable, they have yet neighbors who can gather a force sufficient easily to oppose them.” And Egypt was then a populous country, and well fortified; and who would not have said that the Egyptians were equal to the Assyrians? and the Jews also thought themselves safe through a treaty with them. And then there was Syria; and there were many kingdoms, with which the Jews might have boasted that they were surrounded, so that no access to them was open to the Assyrians; for however insufficient were the people of Moab or the people of Amman, yet they were all joined together, even Edom, and Ammon, and Moab: and then Tyrus and Sidon, and the many neighboring kingdoms, might certainly have been sufficient to resist the Assyrians. Now, that no one might object all this, the Prophet shortly anticipates it by saying, that God would be the leader of his army; as though he had said, “I have already declared this to be the hand of God: for the Assyrians will not come here of their own accord; that is, without being stirred up by God: but as this truth has not as yet sufficiently moved your feelings, know that God will be the leader of this army: *God will send forth his voice before his army*.” Here he distinctly calls the Assyrians the attendants of God; they shall not then come as soldiers

hired by their own king, they shall not come as carrying on war for an earthly king, but the Lord himself shall guide them, and by his voice encourage them. By this expression the Prophet shows that the Jews would not have a contest with one nation only, but also with God himself and with all his celestial power.

He therefore says, *God will utter his voice before his army; for leery great will be his camp.* He again repeats that the multitude which was to execute the biddings of God would be so great, that the Jews would seek forces in vain to resist it. *Strong*, he says, *is he who executes his word.* He expresses more clearly what I have stated already, that though cupidity impelled the Assyrians, that though they were intent on rapine and plunder, yet they would not come merely through an impulse of their own, but that the Lord would prepare them and use them as his instruments: “*Powerful*, then, *is he who does the word of God*; that is, who executes his command; not that the Assyrians designed to show regard to God or to offer to him their service, as the faithful do, who willingly devote themselves to Him; but that the Lord by his secret providence guided them and employed them to punish his own people.

He afterwards adds in the last place, *For great will be the day of Jehovah and terrible, and who will endure it?* In this clause he shows that the vengeance would be such as would reduce the Jews to nothing, and that it was now time to repent, and that if they still turned a deaf ear to what the Prophet denounces, God would punish their perverseness.

Now with regard to what he says, that *strong* is he who does the word of God, we have elsewhere reminded you that men serve God in two ways, — they either execute his commands willingly, or are led to do so by a blind impulse. The angels and the faithful perform God’s commands, because they are guided by the spirit of obedience; but the wicked also, and the devil who is their head, fulfill God’s biddings; this, however, is not to be imputed to them as obedience, for they are only led by their own wicked purposes, and seek to destroy, as far as they can, the whole government of God; but they are constrained, willing or unwilling, to obey God, not of their own accord or willingly, as I have said, but the Lord turns all their efforts to answer the end which he has decreed. Whatever, then, Satan and the wicked attempt to do, they at the same time serve God and obey his commands; and though they rage against God, he yet holds

them in by his bridle, and also so guides their attempts and their purposes as to answer his own ends. In this sense, then, it is, that Joel says, that the Assyrians would do the word of God; not that it was their purpose to obey God, not that God had commanded them anything, but he puts the word of the Lord here for his secret purpose. As, then, the wicked perform no voluntary obedience to God, but constrained, when they execute God's commands; so there is a twofold command or word of God: there is the command by which he teaches his own children and leads them to obey him; and there is another, a hidden command, when he deigns not to address men, and shows not what pleases him or what he means to do, but suffers them to be led by their own sinful desires; in the meantime, he has his own secret purpose, which by them he executes though without their intention.

PRAYER.

Grant, almighty God, that as thou invites us daily with so much kindness and love, and makes known to us thy paternal goodwill, which thou didst once show to us in Christ thy Son, — O grant, that, being allured by thy goodness, we may surrender ourselves wholly to thee, and become so teachable and submissive, that wherever thou guidest us by thy Spirit thou mayest follow us with every blessing: let us not, in the meantime, be deaf to thy warnings; and whenever we deviate from the right way, grant that we may immediately awake when thou warnest us, and return to the right path, and deign thou also to embrace us and reconcile us to thyself through Christ our Lord. Amen.

LECTURE FORTY-SECOND

<290212> JOEL 2:12-13

12. Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning:

12. Atque etiam nunc dicet Jehova, convertimini ad me in toto corde vestro, et in jejunio, et in fletu, et in planctu.

13. And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.

13. Et scindite cor vestrum, et non vestimenta vestra, et convertimini ad Jehovam Deum vestrum, quia ipse propitius et misericors, longus ad iram, et multus clementia, et poenitebit eum super malo.

The Prophet, having proclaimed the dreadful judgment which we have noticed, now shows that he did not intend to terrify the people without reason, but, on the contrary, to encourage them to repentance; which he could not do without offering to them the hope of pardon; for as we have said before, and as it may be collected from the whole of Scripture, men cannot be restored to the right ways except they entertain a hope of God's mercy inasmuch as he who has been ungodly, when he despairs, wholly disregards himself, observing no restraint. Hence the Prophet now represents God as propitious and merciful, that he might thus kindly allure the people to repentance.

He says first, *And even now the Lord says, Turn ye to me.* The Prophet exhorts the people, not in his own name, but speaks in the person of God himself. He might indeed have borne witness to the favor which he proclaimed; but the discourse becomes more striking by introducing God as the speaker. And there is a great importance in the words, even now; for when one considers what we have noticed in the beginning of the chapter, a prospect of relief could hardly have been deemed possible. God had, indeed, in various ways, tried to restore the people to the right way; but, as we have seen, the greater part had become so void of feeling, that the scourges of God were wholly ineffectual; there remained, then, nothing but

the utter destruction which the Prophet threatened them with at the beginning of the second chapter. Yet, in this state of despair, he still sets forth some hope of mercy, provided they turned to him; *even now*, he says. The particles **אנ** *ugam* are full of emphasis, “even now” that is, “Though ye have too long abused God’s forbearance, and with regard to you, the opportunity is past, for ye have closed the door against yourselves; yet even now, — which no one could have expected, and indeed what ought to be thought incredible by yourselves, — even now God waits for you, and invites you to entertain hope of salvation.” But it was necessary that these two particles, *even now*, should be added; for it is not in the power of men to fix for themselves, as they please, the season for mercy. God here shows the acceptable time, as Isaiah says (^{<234908>} Isaiah 49:8) to be, when he has not yet rejected men, but when he offers to be propitious. We must then remember that the Prophet gives not here liberty to men to delay the time, as the profane and scorners are wont to do, who trifle with God from day to day; but the Prophet here shows that we must obey the voice of God, when he invites us, as also Isaiah says, ‘Behold now the time accepted, behold the day of salvation: seek God now, for he is near; call on him while he may be found.’ So then, as I have reminded you, these two particles, *even now*, are added, that men may be made attentive to the voice of God when he invites them, that they may not delay till tomorrow, for the Lord may then close the door, and repentance may be too late. We at the same time see how indulgently God bears with men, since he left a hope of pardon to a people so obstinate and almost past recovery.

Even now, he says, *turn ye to me with your whole heart*. The Prophet here reminds us that we must not act feignedly with God; for men are ever disposed to trifle with him. We indeed see what almost the whole world is wont to do. God graciously meets us and is ready to receive us unto favor, though we have a hundred times alienated ourselves from him; but we bring nothing but hypocrisy and disguise: hence the Prophet declares here distinctly, that this dissimulation does not please God, and that they can hide nothing, who only pretend some sort of repentance by external signs, and that what is required is the serious and sincere feeling of the heart. This is what he means by the whole heart; not that perfect repentance can be formed in men, but the whole or complete heart is opposed to a divided heart: for men well understand that God is not ignorant; yet they divide

their heart, and when they bestow some portion on God, they think that he is satisfied; and in the meantime there remains an interior and some hidden perverseness, which separates them far from God. This vice the Prophet now condemns, when he says, *Turn with the whole heart*. He then shows that it is an hypocrisy abominable to God, when men keep the greater part of their heart, as it were, closed up, and think it enough, if only they bring, so to speak, some volatile feeling.

He afterwards adds, *fasting, and weeping, and mourning*; and by these words he shows how grievously they had sinned; as though he said, that they deserved not only one kind of destruction, but were worthy of hundred deaths; that God therefore would not now be content with any common repentance, and except they came suppliantly and deeply felt their own guilt. It is indeed true, that we ought daily and even constantly to sigh, because we continue almost every hour to provoke God's wrath against us; but the Prophet here speaks of solemn fasting, because the people had so grievously offended God that there was required some extraordinary confession, such as he here describes. *Come then to me with fasting, and weeping, and wailing*" that is "Show at length that you are guilty and submissively deprecate the vengeance which ye have through your wickedness deserved." He speaks like a judge, when he tells the criminal, not to act dissemblingly, but simply to confess his fault. The guilty are indeed wont to weave many excuses to avoid punishment; but when the judge deems a man guilty, and he is abundantly proved to be so, he says, "What good can you do? for these your shuffling and subterfuges make your case worse: for now I hold you bound, and you cannot escape by these shifts, and will only the more provoke my displeasure. If then you wish me to show you favor, own how grievously you have offended, and without any coloring; confess now that you are worthy of death, and that nothing else remains for you, except I mercifully pardon you: for if you try to extenuate your crime, if you attempt by some excuse to seek reprieve, you will gain nothing." So now does the Lord deal with this people: *Turn to me*, he says; first, sincerely; then *with fasting, with weeping, and with wailing*; that is, "Let it appear that you suppliantly deprecate the destruction which ye have deserved, for moderate repentance will not do, inasmuch as ye are guilty before me of so many crimes." We now apprehend the Prophet's meaning.

He then subjoins, *Rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn to Jehovah your God.* The Prophet again repeats that we ought to deal sincerely with God; for all those ceremonies, by which men imagine that they discharge their duties, are mere mockeries, when they are not preceded by a pure and sincere heart. But as they were wont under mournful circumstances to rend their garments, he therefore says, “God has become now insensible to these customs; for with regard to men, ye are ceremonious enough, and more than enough: ye indeed rend your garments, and thus draw pity from men, and yet your heart remains whole, there is no rending, no opening; *Rend then your heart,*” that is, “Leave off thus to mock God, as ye have been wont to do, and begin with your heart.” It is indeed certain that the orientals were given to many ceremonies; but the vice the Prophet here condemns in the Jews is natural as it were to all men; so that every one of us is inclined to hypocrisy, and has need of having his attention drawn to the sincerity of the heart. We must then remember that this truth is to be set forth at all times and to all nations. Let any one search himself and he will find that he labors under this evil, — that he would rather rend his garment than his heart. And since the Jews usually observed this custom, the Prophet does not without reason deride it, and say, that it was of no account with God except they rent their hearts. But when he bids them to rend their hearts and not their garments, though he seems to repudiate that external practice, he does not yet distinctly condemn it, but intimates that it was a lawful thing, provided the heart was rent. Now this expression, *Rend the heart,* ought not to be deemed harsh, for it is to be referred to the external practice: when they rent the garments, they made themselves naked before God and put off all ornaments; but he wished them to be displeased with themselves, and rather to make bare the heart itself. The heart of hypocrites, we know, is wrapped up, and they ever have recourse to hiding places, that they may avoid the presence of God. Then the similitude is most suitable, when the Prophet bids them to rend the heart. Besides, the passage is clear enough, and needs not many remarks; it means, that God regards the real feeling of the heart, as it is said in ^{<240401>}Jeremiah 4:1; he is not content with ocular obedience, such as men exhibit, but he would have us to deal with him in sincerity and truth.

Hence he repeats again, *Turn to Jehovah your God.* Here the Prophet shows, from what God is, that men foolishly and grossly deceive

themselves when they would please God with their ceremonies: “What!”, he says, “have you to do with a child?” For the import of the words is this, — “When an offense against man is to be removed, ye anxiously come to him: now when ye perceive that God is angry with you, ye think that he will be propitious to you, if ye only trifle with him; can God bear such a reproach?” We hence see what the Prophet means when he says, *Turn to Jehovah your God*; that is, “Remember that you have not to do with a block of wood or with a stone, but with your God, who searches hearts, and whom mortals can by no crafts deceive.” The same is said by Jeremiah, ‘Israel, if thou turnest, turn to me,’ (^{<240401>} Jeremiah 4:1;) that is, “Pretend not to turn by circuitous courses and windings, but come in a direct way, and with a real feeling of heart, for I am he who calls thee.” So also now the Prophet says, *Turn to Jehovah your God*.

Then follows the promise of pardon, *For he is propitious and merciful*. We have already said that repentance is preached in vain, except men entertain a hope of salvation; for they can never be brought to fear God truly, unless they trust in him as their Father, as it is stated in ^{<19D004>} Psalm 130:4 ‘With thee is propitiation that thou mayest be feared.’ Hence, whenever the Prophets were anxious to effect anything by their doctrine, while exhorting the people to repentance, they joined to the invitation “Come,” the second part, “Ye shall not come in vain.” This “Come,” comprehends all exhortations to repentance; “Ye shall not come in vain,” includes this testimony respecting God’s grace, that He will never reject miserable sinners, provided they return to him with the heart. The Prophet then now engaged on this second head; God, he says, *is propitious and merciful*. And this connection is to be observed by us; for as Satan fills us with insensibility when God invites us, so also he draws us away into despair when God denounces judgment, when he shows that it is not time for sleep. “What good will you gain?” Thus Satan by his craft disheartens us, that we may labor in vain, when we seek to be reconciled to God. Hence, whenever Scripture exhorts us to repentance, let us learn to join this second part, “God invites us not in vain.” If then we return to him, he will be instantly inclined to grant forgiveness; for he wills not that miserable men should labor in vain or be tormented. This is the benefit of which the Prophet speaks when he says that God is propitious and merciful.

He afterwards adds, that *he is slow to wraths and abundant in goodness*. These testimonies respecting God occur often in other places; and all the

Prophets, as well as David, have borrowed these declarations from ^{<023401>}Exodus 34:1; where the nature of God is described; and He is said there to be propitious and merciful, slow to wrath, and abundant in goodness. Though there is no need of dwelling longer on these words, as we perceive the Prophet's design; yet more extended remarks will not be superfluous since the Prophet so much at large recommends the mercy of God. Though men too much indulge themselves in security, yet when God calls them to himself, they are not able to receive his favor; though he may testify twice or thrice that he will be propitious to them, yet he cannot persuade them but with great difficulty. This is the reason why the Prophet, after having said that God is propitious and merciful, adds, that he is *slow to wrath, and abundant in goodness*; it was, that the Jews might overcome their distrust, and that however much despair might keep them back, they might not yet hesitate to come to God, seeing that he declares himself to be so merciful.

He at last adds, *He will repent of the evil*. The Prophet here not only describes the nature of God, but goes further and says, that God, who is by nature placable, will not remain fixed in his purpose, when he sees people returning to him in sincerity; but that he suffers himself to be turned to show favor, so as to remit the punishment which he had previously denounced. And it is a mode of speaking which often occurs in Scripture, that God repents of evil; not that he really changes his purpose, but this is said according to the apprehensions of men: for God is in himself immutable, and is said to turn from his, purpose, when he remits to man the punishment he has previously threatened. Whatever proceeds from God's mouth ought to be regarded as an inviolable decree; and yet God often threatens us conditionally, and though the condition be not expressed it is nevertheless to be understood: but when he is pacified to us and relaxes the punishment, which was in a manner already decreed according to the external word, he is then said to repent. And we know, that as we do not apprehend God such as he is, he is therefore described to us in such a way as we can comprehend, according to the measure of our infirmity. Hence God often puts on the character of men, as though he were like them; and as this mode of speaking is common, and we have spoken of it elsewhere, I now pass it by more briefly. It follows —

14. Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the LORD your God?

14. Quis novit an revertatur et poeniteat eum, et relinquat post se (alii vertunt, post eum; ego tamen malo sic transferre, Relinquat post se) benedictionem, oblationem et libamen Jehovae Deo vestro?

The Prophet seems at first sight to leave men here perplexed and doubtful; and yet in the last verse, as we have seen, he had Offered a hope of favor, provided they sincerely repented. Hence the Prophet seems not to pursue the same subject, but rather to vary it: and we have already said, that all exhortations would be frigid, nay, useless, by which God stirs us up to repentance, except he were to testify that he is ready to be reconciled. Seeing then that the Prophet here leaves the minds of men in suspense, he seems to rescind what he has before alleged respecting God's mercy. But we must understand that this is a mode of speaking which often occurs in Scripture. For wherever God is set forth to us as one hardly willing to pardon, it is done to rouse our slothfulness, and also to shake off our negligence. We are at first torpid when God invites us, except he applies his many goads; and then we act formally in coming to him: it is hence needful that both these vices should be corrected in us, — our torpor must be roused, — and those self-complacences, in which we too much indulge ourselves, must be shaken off. And this is the object of the Prophet; for he addresses, as we have seen, men almost past recovery. If he had only said, God is ready to pardon, if he had used this way of speaking, they would have come negligently, and would not have been sufficiently touched by the fear of God: hence the Prophet here, as it were, debates the matter with them, “Even though we ought justly to despair of pardon, (for we are unworthy of being received by God,) yet there is no reason why we should despair; *for who knows*” which means “God is placable and we must not despair.”

The Prophet then sets forth here the difficulty of obtaining pardon, not to leave men in suspense, for this would be contrary to his former doctrine; but to create in them a desire for the grace of God, that they might by

degrees gather courage, and yet not immediately rise to confidence, but that they might come anxiously to God, and with much deliberation, duly considering their offenses. We now understand the purpose of the Prophet.

But this will be easier understood by supposing two gradations in repentance. Then the first step is, when men feel how grievously they have offended. Here sorrow is not to be immediately removed after the manner of impostors, who cajole the consciences of men, so that they indulge themselves, and deceive themselves, with empty self-flatteries. For the physician does not immediately ease pain, but considers what is more necessary: it may be he will increase it, for a thorough clearing may be needful. So also do the Prophets of God, when they observe trembling consciences, they do not immediately apply soothing consolations, but on the contrary show that they ought not, as we have already said, to trifle with God, and exhort them while willingly running to God, to set before them his terrible judgment, that they may be more and more humbled. The second step is, when the Prophets cheer the minds of men, and show that God now willingly meets them, and desires nothing more than to see men willing to be reconciled to him.

The Prophet is now urging them to take the first step, when he says, *Who knows whether the Lord will turn?* But some may object and say, “Then the Prophet has spoken inconsistently; for first he has described God as merciful, and has spoken of his goodness without any reserve; and then he throws in a doubt: he seems here to observe no consistency.” I answer, that the Prophets of God do not always very anxiously hold to what seems consistent in their discourses; and farther, that the Prophet has not spoken here in vain or inconsiderately; for he, in the first place, generally sets forth God as merciful, and afterwards addresses particularly a people who were almost past recovery, and says, “Though ye think that it is all over with you as to your salvation, and ye deserve to be rejected by God, yet ye ought not to continue in this state; rather entertain a hope of pardon.” This is what the Prophet had in view; he throws in no doubt, so as to make the sinner uncertain, whether or not he could obtain pardons; but as I have said, he wished only to rouse torpidity, and also to shake off vain self-flatteries.

He then adds, *And leave after him a blessing.* We here see more clearly what I have already said, that the Prophet, considering the state of those whom he addressed, states a difficulty; for the Jews were not to escape temporary punishment, and the Prophet did not intend to dismiss them in a secure state, as though God would inflict on them no punishment; nay, he wished to bend their necks that they might receive the strokes of God, and calmly submit to his correction. But all hope might have been lost, when the Jews saw, that though the Prophet had declared that God would be propitious, they were yet not spared, but suffered severe punishment for their sins, — “What does this mean? Has God then disappointed us? We hoped that he would be propitious, and yet he ceases not to be angry with us.” Hence the Prophet now subjoins, *Who knows whether he will leave behind him a blessing?*

What is this — *behind him?* What does it mean? Even this, that as God was to be a severe judge to punish the people’s wickedness, the Prophet now says, “Though God beats you with his rods, he can yet relieve you by administering comfort. Ye indeed think that you are beaten almost to death; but the Lord will temperate his wrath, so that a blessing will follow these most grievous punishments.” We now, then, understand the purpose of the Prophet: for he does not simply promise pardon to the Jews, but mitigates the dread of punishment, that is, that though God would chastise them, he would yet give place to mercy. Then God *will leave behind him a blessing*; that is “These strokes shall not be incurable.” And this admonition is very necessary, whenever God deals severely with us; for when we feel his wrath, we then think that there is no grace remaining. It is then not without reason that the Prophet says, that God leaves behind him a blessing; which means, that when he shall pass by us with his rod, he will yet restrain his severity, so that some blessing will remain.

He afterwards adds, מנחה ונסך ליהוה אלהים *meneche unesac laIeuve Aleicam*, an offering and a libation, he says, to Jehovah your God. This has been designedly added, that the Jews might entertain more hope. For with regard to them, they had deserved to be wholly exterminated a hundred times; yea, they deserved to pine away utterly through famine: but the Prophet intimates here, that God would have a regard for his own glory and his worship. “Though,” he says, “we have deserved to perish by famine, yet God will be moved by another consideration, even this, — that there may be some offering, that there may be some libation in the temple:

since then God has chosen us a people to himself, and has required the first-fruits to be offered to him, and has consecrated for himself all our provision and all our produce in the first-fruits, and also in the daily offerings, though he has now resolved to consume us with famine and want, yet that his worship may continue, he will make the land fruitful to us, corn and wine will yet be produced for us,” But the Prophet does not mean that there would only be so much corn as would be enough for offerings, or only so much wine as would be sufficient for libations; but he means, as I have already said, that though God would not provide for the safety of the people, he would yet have a regard for his own glory. God required the corn and the wine to be offered to him, not that he needed them, but because he consecrated to himself our provision. As then he would have the food and provisions, on which we live, to be sacred to him, he will not allow them wholly to fail. “God will yet surely pity us, and he will pity us, because he has deigned to choose us a people to himself, and so to join us with himself, that he wishes to eat, as it were, with us.” For God seemed then to partake, as it were, of the same table with his people; for the law required bread or the ears of corn, and also wine, to be offered to God: not that he, as I have said, needed such supports; but that he might show that he had all things in common with his people. This communion then, or fellow-participation of God with his chosen people, gave them more hope; and this is what the Prophet had in view.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou seest us so foolish in nourishing our vices, and also so ensnared by the gratifications of the flesh, that without being constrained we hardly return to thee, — O grant, that we may feel the weight of thy wrath, and be so touched with the dread of it, as to return gladly to thee, laying aside every dissimulation, and devote ourselves so entirely to thy service, that it may appear that we have from the heart repented, and that We have not trifled with thee by an empty pretense, but have offered to thee our hearts as a sacrifice, so that we and all our works might be sacred offerings to thee through our whole life, that thy name may be glorified in us through Christ our Lord. Amen.

LECTURE FORTY-THIRD

<290215> JOEL 2:15-17	
15. Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly:	15. Clangite tuba in Sion, sanctificate jejunium, indicite conventum:
16. Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet.	16. Colligite populum, sanctificate coetum, coedunate senes, colligite parvulos et sugentes ubera, et egrediatur sponsus e penetrali suo et sponsa e thalamo suo.
17. Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?	17. Inter atrium et altare plorent sacerdotes, ministri Jehovae, et dicant, Propitius esto Jehova super populum tuum; et ne des haereditatem tuam in opprobrium, ut dominantur super eos gentes: cur dicent in populis, Ubi est Deus eorum?

Here again the Prophet reminds them that there was need of deep repentance; for not only individuals had transgressed, but the whole people had become guilty before God; and we also know how many and grievous their sins had been. There is no wonder then that the Prophet requires a public profession of repentance.

He bids them first to *sound the trumpet in Zion*. This custom, as we have seen at the beginning of the chapter, was in common use under the Law; they summoned their meetings by the sound of trumpets. There is then no doubt but that the Prophet here refers to an extraordinary meeting. They sounded the trumpets whenever they called the people to the festivals. But it must have been unusual for the Jews to proclaim a fast on account of God's heavy judgment, which was to come on them unless it was prevented. He then shows the purpose of this, bidding them to *sanctify a*

fast. By this word קֹדֶשׁ *kodesh*, he means a proclamation for a holy purpose. *Sanctify*, then *a fast*, that is, Proclaim a fast in the name of God.

We slightly touched on the subject of fasting in the first chapter, but deferred a fuller discussion to this place. Fasting, we know, is not of itself a meritorious work, as the Papists imagine it to be: there is, indeed, strictly speaking, no work meritorious. But the Papists dream that fasting, in addition to its merit and worth, is also by itself of much avail in the worship of God; and yet fasting, when regarded in itself is an indifferent work.^{f4} It is not then approved by God, except for its end; it must be connected with something else, otherwise it is a vain thing. Men, by private fastings prepare themselves for the exercise of prayer, or they mortify their own flesh, or seek a remedy for some hidden vices. Now I do not call fasting temperance; for the children of God, we know, ought through their whole life to be sober and temperate in their habits; but fasting, I regard that to be, when something is abstracted from our moderate allowance: and such a fast, when practiced privately, is, as I have said, either a preparation for the exercise of prayer, or a means to mortify the flesh, or a remedy for some vices.

But as to a public fast, it is a solemn confession of guilt, when men suppliantly approach the throne of God, acknowledge themselves worthy of death, and yet ask pardon for their sins. Fasting then, with regard to God, is similar to black and mean garments and a long beard before earthly judges. The criminal goes not before the judge in a splendid dress, with all his fine things, but casts away every thing that was before elegant in his appearance, and by his uncombed hair and long beard he tries to excite the compassion of his judge. There is, at the same time, another reason for fasting; for when we have to do with men, we wish to please their eyes and conciliate their favor; and he who fasts, not only testifies openly that he is guilty, but he also reminds himself of his guilt; for as we are not sufficiently touched by the sense of God's wrath, those aids are useful which help to excite and affect us. He then who fasts, excites himself the more to penitence.

We now perceive the right use of fasting. But it is of public fasting that the Prophet speaks here. For what purpose? That the Jews, whom he had before summoned, might present themselves before God's tribunal, and that they might come there, not with vain excuses, but with humble

prayer. This is the design of fasting. We now see how foolishly the Papists have abused fasting; for they think it to be a meritorious work; they imagine that God is honored by abstinence from meat; they also mention those benefits of fasting to which I have referred; but they join fasts with festivals, as if there was some religion in abstaining from flesh or certain meats. We now then perceive by what gross puerilities the Papists trifle with God. We must then carefully notice the end in view, whenever the Scripture speaks of fasting; for all things will be confounded, except we lay hold on the principle which I have stated — that fasting ought ever to be connected with its end. We shall now proceed.

Proclaim, he says, *a meeting*. **עֲצָרָה** *otsare* is not properly an assembly, but the deed itself: hence also the word is transferred to festivals.

Proclaim, then, *a meeting, call the people, sanctify the assembly*. The word, sanctify, seems to be taken here in a sense different from what it had been before. The people, in order to engage in holy services, performed those rites, as it is well known, by which they cleansed themselves from their pollutions. No one entered the temple without washing; and no one offered a sacrifice without abstaining from an intercourse with his wife. The Prophet then alludes to these legal purgations when he says *Sanctify the assembly*.

He afterwards adds, *Bring together the old, gather the young sucking the breasts*. With regard to the old, we have said before that they are separately named, because they ought to have taken the lead by their example; and further a greater guilt belonged to them, for we know that it is a duty incumbent on the old to govern others, and, as it were, to hold the reins. But when the old themselves become dissolute, and restrain not the lusts of the young, they are doubly culpable before God. It is no wonder then that the Prophet bids here the old to be called; for it became them to be the leaders of others in confessing their repentance. But what follows seems strange. He would have the young, sucking the breasts, to be assembled. Why are these brought in as involved in guilt? Besides, the people were to own their repentance; and yet infants are without understanding and knowledge; so that they could not humble themselves before God. It must, then, have been a mockery and a vain show; nay, the Prophet seems to encourage the people in hypocrisy by bidding young infants to assemble together with men and women. To this I answer, that children ought to have been brought together, that those grown up and

advanced in years might through them perceive what they deserved; for the wrath of God, we know, reached to the very infants, yea, and to brute animals: when God puts forth his hand to punish any people, neither asses nor oxen are exempt from the common scourge. Since, then, God's wrath comes upon brute animals and upon young infants, it is no wonder that the Lord bids all to come forth publicly and to make a confession of repentance; and we see the same to have been the case with brute animals; and when, if the Lord grants, we shall come to the Prophet Jonah, we shall then speak on this subject. The Ninevites, when they proclaimed a fast, not only abstained themselves from meat and drink, but constrained also their oxen and horses to do the same. Why? Because the very elements were involved, as it were, with them in the same guilt: "Lord, we have polluted the earth; whatever we possess we have also polluted by our sins; the oxen the horses, and the asses, are in themselves innocent, but they have contracted contagion from our vices: that we may therefore obtain mercy, we not only offer ourselves suppliantly before thy face, but we bring also our oxen and horses; for if thou exercises the fullest severity against us, thou wilt destroy whatever is in our possession." So also now, when the Prophet bids infants to be brought before God, it is done on account of their parents. Infants were in themselves innocent with regard to the crimes of which he speaks; but yet the Lord could have justly destroyed the infants together with those of advanced age. It is then no wonder that in order to pacify God's wrath the very infants are summoned with the rest: but as I have already said, the reason is on account of their parents, that the parents themselves might perceive what they deserved before God, and that they might the more abhor their sins by observing that God would take vengeance on their children, except he was pacified. For they ought to have reasoned from the less to the greater: "See, if God exercises his own right towards us, there is destruction not only hanging over us, but also over our children; if they are guilty through our crimes, what can we say of ourselves, who are the authors of these evils? The whole blame belongs to us; then severe and dreadful will be God's vengeance on us, except we be reconciled to him."

We now then perceive why infants were called, together with their parents; not that they might confess their penitence, as that was not compatible with their age, but that their parents might be more moved, and that such a sight might touch their feelings, and that dread might also seize

them on seeing that their children were doomed to die with them for no other reason, but that by their contagion and wickedness they had infected the whole land and everything that the Lord had bestowed on them.

He afterwards subjoins, *Let the bridegroom go from his closet, or recess, and the bride from her chamber.* It is the same as though the Prophet had bidden every joy to cease among the people; for it was of itself no evil to celebrate nuptials; but it behooved the people to abstain from every rejoicing on seeing the wrath of God now suspended over them. Hence, things in themselves lawful ought for a time to be laid aside when God appears angry with us; for it is no season for nuptials or for joyful feasts, when God's wrath is kindled, when the darkness of death spreads all around. No wonder, then, that the Prophet bids the bridegroom and the bride to come forth from their chamber, that is, to cast aside every joy, and to defer their nuptials to a more suitable time, and now to undergo their delights, for the Lord appeared armed against all. It would have been then to provoke, as it were, His wrath, to indulge heedlessly in pleasures, when he wished not only to terrify, but almost to frighten to death those who had sinned; for when the Lord threatens vengeance, what else is indifference but a mockery of his power? "I have called you to weeping and wailing; but ye have said, 'We will feast:' as I live, saith the Lord, this iniquity shall never be blotted out." We see how extremely displeased the Lord appears there to be with those who, having been called to weeping and fasting, did yet indulge themselves in their pleasures; for such, as I have said, altogether laugh to scorn the power of God. The Prophet's exhortation ought then to be noticed, when he bids the bridegroom and the bride to leave their nuptials, and to put on the same mournful appearance as the rest of the people. He thus shook off heedlessness from all, since God had appeared with tokens of his wrath. This is the sum of the whole.

Then it follows, *Between the court and the altar let the priests, the ministers of Jehovah, weep.* It was the priests' office, we know, to pray in the name of the whole people; and now the Prophet follows this order. It was not, indeed, peculiar to the priests to pray and to ask pardon of God; but they prayed in the name of all the people. The reason must be well known to us; for God intended by these legal types to remind the Jews, that they could not offer prayers to him, except through some mediator; the people were unworthy to offer prayers by themselves. Hence the priest was, as it were, the middle person. The whole of this is to be

referred to Christ; for by him we now pray; he is the Mediator who intercedes for us. The people stood then afar off, we now dare to come nigh to God; for the vail is rent, and through Christ we are all made priests. Hence, we are allowed in familiar way and in confidence to call God our Father: and yet without Christ's intercession, no access to God would be open to us. This then was the reason for the legal appointment. Hence the Prophet now says, *Let the priests weep*; not that he wished the people in the meantime to neglect their duty; but he expresses what had been prescribed by the law of God; that is, that the priests should offer supplications in the name of the people.

And he says, *Between the court and the altar*; for the people remained in the court, the priests themselves had a court by its side which they called the sacerdotal court; but the people's court was over against the sanctuary. Then the priest stood, as it were, in the middle between God, that is, the ark of the covenant, and the people: the people also were standing there. We now perceive that what the Prophet meant was, that the people had the priests as their mediators to offer prayers; and yet the confession of them all was public. He calls the priests *the ministers of Jehovah*, as we have before found. He thus designates their office; as though he had said, that they were not more worthy than the rest of the people, as though they excelled by their own virtue or merits; but that the Lord had conferred this honor on the tribe of Levi by choosing them to be his ministers. It was then on account of their office that they came nearer to God, and not for any merit in their own works.

He further adds, *Spare, Lord*, or be propitious to, *thy people; and give not thy heritage to reproach, that the Gentiles may rule over them*. Here the Prophet leaves nothing to the priests, but to flee to God's mercy; as though he had said that now no plea remained for the people, and that they were greatly deceived if they pretended any excuse, and that their whole hope was in God's mercy. He afterwards shows the ground on which they were to seek and to hope for mercy; and he calls their attention to God's gratuitous covenant, *Give not thy heritage for a reproach to the Gentiles*. By these words he shows, that if the Jews depended on themselves, they were past recovery; for they had so often and in such various ways provoked God's wrath, that they could not hope for any pardon: they had also been so obstinate that the door as it were had been closed against them on account of their hardness. But the Prophet here reminds them, that as

they had been freely chosen by God as his peculiar people, there remained for them a hope of deliverance, but that it ought not to have been sought in any other way. We now then understand the design of the Prophet, when he speaks of God's heritage; as though he had said, that the people could now undertake nothing to pacify God, had they not been God's heritage: *Give not then thy heritage to reproach.* He had in view the threatening, which he had before mentioned; for it was an extreme kind of vengeance, when the Lord determined to visit his people with utter destruction; after having worn them out and consumed them by famine and want, God resolved wholly to consume them by the sword of enemies. It is then to this vengeance that he now alludes when he says, *That the Gentiles may not rule over them.* It is therefore absurd, as many do, to connect with this the discourse concerning the locusts: such a thing is wholly inconsistent with the design of the Prophet.^{f5}

It is then added, *Why should they say among the people, Where is their God?* The Prophet now adduces another reason, by which the Jews might propitiate God, and that is, because his own glory is concerned: this reason has indeed an affinity to the former, for God could not expose his heritage to the reproaches of the Gentiles without subjecting also his holy name to their blasphemies. But the Prophet shows here more distinctly that God's glory would be subject to reproach among the nations, if he dealt with the people according to the full demands of justice; for the Gentiles would contemptuously deride him, as though he could not save his people. Hence in this second clause he reminds us, that when engaged in seeking pardon, we ought to place before our eyes The glory of God, that we ought not to seek our own salvation without remembering the holy name of God, which ought of right to be preferred to all other things. And at the same time he strengthens also the hope of the people, when he teaches that the glory of God is connected with the salvation of those who had sinned; as though he had said, "God, that he may provide for his own glory, will have mercy on you." They must then have come more willingly to God's presences when they saw that their salvation was connected with the glory of God, and that they would be saved that the name of God might be preserved safe and free from blasphemies.

We now then perceive what the Prophet meant in this verse: he first strips the Jews of all confidence in works, showing that nothing remained for them except they fled to God's free mercy. He then shows that this mercy

is folded on God’s gratuitous covenant, because they were his heritage. In the third place, he shows that God would be merciful to them from a regard to his own glory, lest he should expose it to the reproaches of the Gentiles, if he exercised extreme severity towards his people. Let us now proceed —

<290218> JOEL 2:18-19	
18. Then will the LORD be jealous for his land, and pity his people.	18. Et aemulatus est (aemulabitur, ad verbum) Jehova (hoc est, zelo ducetur Jehova) super terram suam, et propitius erit (et miserabitur, vel, parcet; nam חַמַּל est parcere) populo suo.
19. Yea, the LORD will answer and say unto his people, Behold, I will send you corn, and wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied therewith: and I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen.	19. Et respondit Jehova (vel, respondebit) et dicit (vel, dicet) populo suo, Ecce ego mitto vobis triticum et mustum et oleum, et saturabimini eo (vel illis potius, est mutatio numeri,) et non dabo vos amplius opprobium inter Gentes.

The Prophet here again repeats, that prayers would not be in vain, provided the Jews truly humbled themselves before God. Then God, he says, will be jealous for his land and spare his people. He confirms what I have already said that God would deal mercifully with his people, because they were his heritage, that is because he had chosen them for himself. For the title of heritage, whence does it proceed except from the gratuitous covenant of God? for the Jews were not more excellent than others, but election was the only fountain from which the Jews had to draw any hope. We now then see why these words, *God will be jealous for his land*, are added; as though he said “Though this land has been polluted by the wickedness of men, yet God has consecrated it to himself: He will, therefore, regard his own covenant, and thus turn away his face from looking on their sins.” *He will spare*, he says, *his people*, that is, his chosen people: for, as I have said, the Prophet no doubt ascribes here the safety of the people, and the hope of their safety, to the gratuitous election of God; for the jealousy of God is nothing else but the vehemence and ardor of his

paternal love. God could not, indeed, express how ardently he loves those whom he has chosen without borrowing, as it were, what belongs to men. For we know that passions appertain not to him; but he is set forth as a father, who burns with jealousy when he sees his son ill-treated; he acknowledges his own blood, his bowels are excited, — or, as a husband, who, on seeing dishonor done to his wife, is moved; and though he had been a hundred times offended, he yet forgets every offense; for he regards that sacred union between himself and his wife. Such a character, then, does God assume, that he might the better express how much and how intensely he loves his own elect. Hence he says, *God will be jealous for his land*. As he has hitherto been inflamed with just wrath, so now a contrary feeling will overcome the former; not that God is agitated by various passions, as I have already said, but this mode of speaking transferred from men, is adopted on account of our ignorance.

He afterwards says, *God has answered⁵⁶ and said to his people, Behold, I will send to you corn, wine, and oil*. The Prophet does not here recite what had been done, but, on the contrary, declares, that God in future would be reconciled to them; as though he said, “I have hitherto been a herald of war, and bidden all to prepare themselves for the coming evil: but now I am a messenger to proclaim peace to you; if only you are resolved to turn to God, and to turn unfeignedly, I do now testify to you that God will be propitious to you; and as to your prayers know that they are already heard; that is, know that as soon as they were conceived, they were heard by the Lord.” Hence he says, He *has answered*; that is “If, moved by my exhortation, ye return with sincerity to God, he will meet you, nay, he has already met you; he waits not until ye have done all that ye ought to do; but when he bids you to come to his temple and to weep, he at the same time wipes off your tears, he removes every cause of sorrow and anxiety.” God, then, has answered; that is, “I am to you a certain and sufficient witness, that your prayers have been already accepted before God, though, as I have before reminded you, ye have not offered them.”

And, at the same time, he speaks of the effect, *Behold, I will send to you corn, wine, and oil; and ye shall be satisfied*. Here, by the effects, he proves that God would be propitious; for want of food was the first evidence of God’s displeasure, to be followed by the destruction which the Prophet had threatened. What does he say now? God will restore to you

abundance of corn, wine, and oil; and he says further, *I will not give you to the Gentiles for a reproach that they may rule over you.*

We now then apprehend the meaning of the Prophet; for he not only promises that God would be placable but also declares that he was already placable; and this he confirms by external tokens; for God would immediately remove the sins of his wrath, and turn them into blessings. Hence he says, ‘He will give you abundance of corn, wine, and oil, so as fully to satisfy you.’ As they had perceived that God was angry with them by the sterility of the land, and also by its produce being consumed by chafers, by locusts, and other animals or insects; so now the Lord would testify his love to them by the abounding fruitfulness of every thing. And then he joins another sentence, *I will not give you any more for a reproach to the Gentiles.* When he says, “any more,” he intimates that they had been before exposed to reproach; and we indeed know that they were then suffering many evils; but there remained that destruction of which we have heard. God does then here promise, that they should no more be subject to the reproaches of the Gentiles provided they repented; for the Prophet ever speaks conditionally. It now follows —

<290220> JOEL 2:20	
20. But I will remove far off from you the northern army, and will drive him into a land barren and desolate, with his face toward the east sea, and his hinder part toward the utmost sea, and his stink shall come up, and his ill savor shall come up, because he has done great things.	20. Et Aquilonarem procul abigam a vobis, et disjiciam eum ad terram desertam et siccitatis: facies ejus ad mare orientale, et terminum ejus (disjiciam; ego enim απο του κοινου repeto) ad mare novissimum: et ascend et foetor ejus, et ascendet putredo ejus; quia magnificavit ad faciendum (hoc est, quia magnifice se extulit ad faciendum.)

In this verse he more fully confirms the Jews, that they might not be afraid of reproach from the Gentiles. It may have been that the Assyrians were now in readiness, prepared for war; it was then difficult to free the Jews from every fear. The Prophet had said generally that they would be no more subject to the mockeries of the Gentiles; but yet fear could not but be

felt by them. “We see the Assyrians already armed; and what can we expect but to be devoured by them? for we are not able to resist them.” Anxiety then must have constantly tormented the Jews, had he not distinctly and in express words declared, “It is in God’s power to drive away the Assyrians, and to confound all their attempts.” The Prophet, therefore, is now on this subject. The *Northlander*,^{f7} he says, *will I remove far from you*. The Chaldeans and the Assyrians, we know, were northward of Judea. He then means here by the North those enemies, whose preparations terrified the Jews. Hence he says, *I will drive them from you, and drive them far into a land of desert and of drought* ^{f8}. By these words he intimates, that though furnished with the greatest forces, and gaping for the land of Judea, and ready in their cupidity to devour it, the Syrians would yet return home without effecting anything; *I will cast them into a desert land*. In vain, he says, they covet your abundance, and desire to satisfy themselves with the fertility of your land; for I will drive them and their dread away.

He then adds, *His face to the east sea, and his rear to the hindmost sea*; that is, I will scatter them here and there, so that his front shall be to one sea, (supposed to be the Salt Sea,) and his extremity to the *hindmost sea*, which was doubtless the Mediterranean: for the Salt Sea was east to the Jews, that is, it lies, as it is well known, towards the east. We now perceive in part what the Prophet means. But it must, at the same time, be added, that the Prophet removes fear from the Jews, which occupied their minds by observing the power of the Assyrians so great and extensive. “What is to be done? though God is present with us, and protects us by his help, yet how will he resist the Assyrians, for that army will fill the land”. “God will yet find means,” says the Prophet; “though the Assyrians should occupy the whole land, from the Salt or the East Sea to the Meridian or Mediterranean Sea, yet will God drive away this vast multitude: there is no reason then that ye should fear.” Hence the Prophet has designedly set forth how terrible the Assyrian forces would be, that he might show that they could not be resisted, unless the Lord should disperse them and disappoint all their efforts. At last he adds, *And his ill savor shall ascend*: but I am not able to finish to-day.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we continue to excite thy wrath against us, and are so insensible, though thou exhortest us daily to repentance, — O grant, that what thy Prophet teaches may penetrate into our hearts, and be like a sounding trumpet, that we may be really and sincerely made humble before thee, and be so touched with the sense of thy wrath, that we may learn to put off all the depraved affections of our flesh, and not merely to deplore the sins we have already committed: and do thou also look upon us in future, that we may diligently walk in thy fear, and consecrate ourselves wholly to thee; and as thou hast deigned to choose us for thine inheritance, and gather us under thy Christ, may we so live under him as our leader, until we be at length gathered into thy celestial kingdom to enjoy that happy rest, which thou hast promised to us, and which thou promisest also daily, and which has been purchased by the blood of the same, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

LECTURE FORTY-FOURTH

YESTERDAY the Prophet spake of the northern enemy, and said that it was in God's power to drive him far away, that he might not hurt the people, that his vast army would not prevent the dispersion of his power and enterprises. Now he adds this, which we could not finish yesterday, *Ascend will his ill savor, and ascend will his rottenness; for highly has he borne or exalted himself to do his purpose.* The Prophet expresses here more than in the former sentence, and that is, that God would turn to reproach the whole power of the Assyrian. The reason he subjoins deserves to be noticed, 'He has highly exalted himself in his doings,' which means, that he was elated with great pride, thinking he could do anything; therefore he says, 'Ascend will his rottenness and ill savor.' This contains a very striking allusion; for when men deliberate about great things, it is the game as if they were to raise up themselves on high; and we also observe that hither tend their designs, who are engaged in difficult and arduous undertakings; for they are not content with their lots but try to climb above the clouds. Since then the design of all mortals is to rise aloft, when they seek for themselves more than what is just, the Prophet, deriding this folly, says, "Ascend will the ill savor of the Assyrian, as a bad smell ascends from a putrid carcass. He thinks," he says, "that he can do what he pleases, as though heaven and earth were under his control: his power, enterprises forces and splendor, shall not ascend; but his ill savor only shall ascend as from a dead carcass." Why so? "He has mightily exalted himself," he says, "to do his purpose."

He now understand the design of the Prophet: and hence this useful instruction may be gathered, that God so checks the foolish confidence of those who pride themselves on their own strength, that he not only casts them down, but also turns their glory into shame, so that nothing ascends from them but ill savor and the smell of rottenness. Now follows what is of an opposite character: —

<290221> JOEL 2:21

21. Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the LORD will do great things.

21. Ne timeas terra, exulta et laetare; quia magnifice extulit se Jehova ad faciendum.

Here he shows that God would have his turn to exalt himself, which the Assyrian presumptuously attempted to do. For God seems for a time to lie still, when he withholds himself, when he puts not forth his power, but waits to see the tendency of the insane conspiracies and the Satanic madness of those who rise up against him and his Church. But having for a time thus restrained himself, he at length comes forth; and this is what the Prophet means when he says, *God has highly exalted himself to do his purpose*. The Assyrian first attempted this; but now the Lord in his turn will raise up himself. God indeed could have done this before, but he would not; and we see this to be his usual mode of proceeding, to connive at the presumption of men, till the ripened time comes which he has predetermined; and then he dissipates in a moment their enterprises.

God, then, has now nobly exalted himself; therefore *rejoice and exult, O Land*. But he says first, *Fear not, O Land*; and then, *Exult and rejoice*. For it was necessary, in the first place, to remove the fear with which the minds of all were now seized. The Prophet, then, begins with consolation; for the Jews could have hardly entertained any joy, except the fear that oppressed them was first shaken off. Hence the Prophet maintains due order by saying, “Fear not, O Land, but rather exult and rejoice.” He afterwards subjoins —

<290222> JOEL 2:22

22. Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field: for the pastures of the wilderness do spring, for the tree beareth her fruit, the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength.

22. Ne timeatis bestiae agri, quia germinarunt pascua deserti, quia arbor protulit fructum suum, ficulnea et vitis protulerunt virtutem (vel, substantiam) suam.

Here the Prophet turns his address to the beasts; not that his instruction suited them; but it was a more efficacious mode of speaking, when he invited the very beasts to a participation of the people's joy; for except the Jews had been made to know that God's wrath was now nigh at hand, no consolation which the Prophet has hitherto applied would have been of any weight with them. But now since they perceived that God's wrath did not only suspend over them, but extended much farther, even to the beasts, and since the Lord would have mercy on them, so that his blessing would be partaken in common by the beasts and brute animals, the address was far more impressive. We hence see that the Prophet, for the best reason, directed his discourse to the very beasts, though destitute of mind and discernment. For in addressing brute animals he addressed men with double force; that is, he impressed their minds more effectually, so that they might seriously confess how great was God's wrath, and also how great would be his blessing.

Beasts, he says, *fear not*. Then the beasts of the field ought to have dreaded the judgment of God which he had before denounced; for except God had been pacified to his people, the fire of his wrath would have consumed the whole land, trees and pastures; so all the beasts must have been famished. But now when God is reconciled to his people, his blessing will smile on the brute animals. What then is to be said of men? For God is properly propitious to them, and not to brute animals. We hence see that the fruit of reconciliation is made more evident, when it is in part extended to the brute creation.

He therefore says, *Fear not, ye beasts of the field: for the pastures of the desert will grow, the trees will bring forth their fruit*. By these words the Prophet intimates, that had God's wrath toward his people been implacable, the sterility of the land would not have been improved. Now then whence came so sudden a change that the pastures grew, that the trees produced their fruits, both the fig-tree and the vine, except that God was pleased to bless the land, after having received men into favor? We now then apprehend the meaning of the Prophet, even this, — that the land would be made by an angry God to execute his judgment, and that there would be no remedy for the barrenness of the land until men propitiated God. This is the sum of the whole. It now follows —

23. Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.

23. Et filii Sion exultate, et gaudete in Jehova Deo vestro, quia dedit vobis pluviam ad justitiam (alii vertunt, doctorem justitiae; sed de eo paulo post dicemus) et descendere faciet vobis imbrem pluviam (vel, pluviam tempestivam, ut vertunt: dicemus etiam de hac voce) et pluviam in mense primo.

He now exhorts the Jews also to rejoice, but in a way different from that of the land and of the beasts. *Rejoice*, he says, *in your God*. For the beasts and the sheep, while rejoicing, cannot raise their thoughts higher than to their food: hence, the joy of brute animals, as they say, terminates in its object. But the Prophet sets forth God before the Jews as the ground of their joy. We then see how he distinguishes them from brute animals from the land and other elements; for he not only bids them to rejoice in meat and drink, in the abundance of provisions, but he also bids them to rejoice in the Lord their God; and he says no more, “The land will yield its strength, or the vines and fig-trees, or the trees, will produce their fruit, and the pastures will grow;” no, he speaks not now in this manner, but he says “God himself will give you rain:” for he had to do with men, endued with understanding, yea, with those very Jews who had been from their childhood taught in the law of God: he speaks, not only of the land, not only of bread and wine, but of the Giver himself.

He then reminds them of God’s blessing, and declares that God would be so propitious to them as to pour down his grace upon them, and act the part of a father and a guardian towards them. God then, he says, will bring forth or give to you rain according to what is necessary. Some translate **המורה** *emure* a teacher; and the meaning of the word, we know, is doubtful. At the same time **מורה** *mure* is very often taken for rain, and sometimes generally, and sometimes for a particular kind of rain, as we shall presently see. Though then **מורה** *mure* signifies a teacher, yet the

context here seems not to allow that sense. They who have thus taken it seem to have been led by this one reason, — that it is absurd to set in the first place, and as it were on a higher grade, those fading blessings which belong only to the support and nourishment of the body. But this reason is very foolish; for the Prophets, we know, lead children as it were by initial principles to a higher doctrine. No wonder then that the Prophet here affords them a taste of God's favor in blessings belonging to the body; he afterwards ascends higher, as we shall see: and this view is certainly what the context demands; for the Prophet says at last, "I will hereafter pour my Spirit on all flesh," etc. In these words the Prophet commends the favor of God, which ought to be held as the most valuable: but he begins now with temporal benefits, that he might lead by degrees, and by various steps, a people, rude and weak, to something higher.

Then the word, teacher, by no means suits this place; and we must mark also what immediately follows. He introduces a word derived from **מורה** *mure*; he afterwards adds **מורה** *mure* the second time, which no doubt, means rain; all confess this, and confess it to be taken for rain in the same verse. When all agree then on this point, it seems somewhat strained to render it in the same verse a teacher and also rain; especially since we find that the Prophet's object is this, — to make the people to recognize God's blessing in outward things. There is also another thing which has lead astray these interpreters. There follows immediately the word **לצדקה** *latsadke*, according to what is just. When they join together these word, **המורה לצדקה** *emure latsadke*, they ask, What is the rain of righteousness? They have hence thought that a teacher is here meant. But we know that **משפט** and **צדקה** *meshapheth* and *tsadke* are often taken in Scripture for a just measure, for equity. "God then will not deal with you unequally as hitherto; but having been reconciled to you, he will reassume the part of a father, and will also observe towards you a legitimate order; for things have been on both sides in confusion, inasmuch as ye have been carrying on war against God, and your wickedness has subverted the whole order of nature. But now, God being pacified towards you, there will be on both sides an equable state of things, everything will be in a fitting condition; he will not deal with you any more in an irregular manner." We now then perceive the real meaning of the Prophets and see how frivolous are the reasons which influenced these interpreters, who

have rendered the words, “Teacher of righteousness.” I do not love strained expositions.

Let us now return to the words of the Prophet: *He will give to you, he says, rain according to what is fit*; then he adds, *He will make to descend on you showering rain*, (using another word;) and he adds again the word מורה *mure*, which, no doubt, means rain, and no one denies this. But yet it seems that the word גשם *geshem* has here a specific meaning, and some think it to be a violent shower, occasioned by a storm or tempest; and yet we may gather from many parts of Scripture that the word means rain in general. Now מורה *mure* seems here to be taken for the rain of September, which the Greeks call ξωίμων, προίμων; and so they call מלקוש *melkush* οψίμων, *opsimon*, or the latter rain, as a common interpreter has rendered it. And the cultivated land, we know, needs these two rains, that is, after sowing, and when the fruit is ripening, — after sowing, that the ground by receiving moisture may make the seed to grow; for it then wants moisture to nourish the roots. Hence, the rain of September or October, which is after sowing, is rightly called seasonable rain; and the Greeks, as I have already said, call it προίμων *proimon*; and James, following them, so calls it in James 5, ‘He will give you rain,’ he says, ‘both of the first time and the late rain,’ that is, of the month of March. For in those warm climates the harvests we know, is earlier than with us. We here gather the corn in July but they gather it there in May. The fruit then ripens with them in March, when they need the late rain. And in Jeremiah 5 it appears quite evident, that מורה *mure*, as in this place, is called the rain, which comes down after sowing; for God says there, ‘I will give you,’ etc., and first he uses the general word גשם *geshem*, and then he adds the two kinds of rain, which are also mentioned here; and afterwards he adds, ‘In their time,’ that is, each rain in its time and season. — Then מורה *mure* has its time, and מלקוש *melkush* also has its time; otherwise the words of the prophet would not be consistent.

We now see what the Prophet means. Of the word מלקוש *melkush* we have said something in Hosea 6. Then the Prophet says now, that God would be so propitious to the Jews, as to neglect no means of testifying his favor towards them; for he would give them rain in the month of October and in the month of March, to fertilize the ground after sowing, and before the harvest or before the fruit came to maturity. Here then is

promised to the Jews that the land would be made fertile by natural means. It now follows —

<div><290224> JOEL 2:24</div>	
24. And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil.	24. Et implebuntur horrea frumento et resonabunt torcularia vino (musto, ad verbum: diximus de hac voce prius,) et oleo.

He goes on with the same subject in this verse, and shows the effects of rain; for when the earth is irrigated and satiated with sufficient moisture, it brings forth fruit, rich and plentiful. God then will cause that the rains shall not be useless, for the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine as well as oil. He afterwards adds —

<div><290225> JOEL 2:25</div>	
25. And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you.	25. Et reddam vobis annos (pro aliis annis, subaudiendum est) quibus comedit locusta, bruchus, eruca (חֲסִיל, alii vertunt, rubiginem: sed dixi primo capite me non adeo sollicitum esse de istis vocibus, quia etiam ignotae sunt hodie ipsis Judaeis; sed certum est esse insecta, quae corrumpunt omnes terrae fruges, ut tunc diximus,) exercitus meus magnus, quem miseram ad vos.

The Prophet confirms what he had previously said, and states what is of an opposite character, — that God can as easily restore a rich fruitfulness to the land as he had before rendered it barren by sending devouring insects. *I will give you years*, (for the other years,) he says; and that the Jews might more fully understand that all this was in God’s hand, he expressly declares that the *cankeworms, the chafers, and the locusts* ^{f9}, were his army and as it were his hired army, whom he had employed as it seemed good to him. The spoilers, then, which had destroyed the whole produce of the land, were, as the Prophet declares, the messengers of God: it was not, he says, by chance that the locusts, or the cankerworms, or the

chafers came; but God hired these soldiers, they were his forces and his army to distress the whole people; then famine and want consumed them. It is not then to no purpose that the Prophet mentions here that these destructive insects were God’s army; it is to show more fully what is here promised; for God, who had by this army devoured the whole increase of the land, can now easily restore plenty for the barrenness of past years. Now, when any one lays down his arms, the land is afterwards cultivated, and brings forth its usual fruit: so the Lord also now shows, that the land had been barren, because he had sent forth his army, which laid waste its whole produce. But now, he says, when I shall restore you to favor, there will be no army to devour your fruit: the land then will nourish you, for there will be nothing to prevent you to receive its wonted produce.

Had not the Jews been made assured that the land had been sterile, because the locusts, and the chafers, and the cankerworms, were the army which the Lord had prepared they might have ever dreaded these spoilers: “Surely the locusts will spring up, the chafers and the cankerworms will come, to devour all the fruit.” The Prophet shows that this happened not by chance: “Now then, when God shall be reconciled to you, the land will yield its increase, and nothing shall hinder you from enjoying its abundance.”

By calling this army *great*, he shows that God has no need of strong forces to subdue men; for when he prepares locusts and insects, which are but little things, they snatch food from the mouths of men and leave them in want; though no one puts forth a sword against them, they yet pine away with hunger. The Prophet then derides here the arrogance of men, and shows that God needs not do much, when he intends to reduce them to nothing. Let us now proceed —

<290226> JOEL 2:26	
26. And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed.	26. Et comedetis comedendo et vos satiando, et laudabitis nomen Jehovae Dei vestri; quia egit vobiscum mirabiliter (ad miraculum,) et non pudefiet populus meus in perpetuum.

He now concludes what he has hitherto said of God's blessing. As the Jews were starving while God was offended, so he promises that when reconciled to him they should have abundance of produce from the land: *Ye shall eat plentifully, he says, and satisfy yourselves*. But he mentions also their gratitude; for it was an evidence of true repentance when they praised the name of God, whom they understood to be the giver of their abundance; for he had before proved that the land was under his power, when he consumed its whole substance, so that none of it came to supply the wants of man. Hence the Prophet exhorts them to give thanks, that they might thus declare that they from the heart repented. *Ye shall then praise the name of Jehovah your God*". Why? "*Because he will deal with you wonderfully*". He takes away here every plea for ignorance. We know how difficult it is to lead men to do this act of religion, for which we yet confess that we were born; for what is more natural than to acknowledge God's bounty towards us, when we enjoy many blessings? But yet, though God in various ways stimulates us, he cannot draw from us genuine gratitude. This is the reason why the Prophet now says, "God will deal with you wonderfully: though ye are stupid, God will yet by his power awaken you; for he will not deal with you in a common way." He then mentions something miraculous, that he might leave to the Jews no excuse, in case they considered not God's bounty and perceived not in this change, first, what they had deserved and then how merciful God had been to them: for this change could not have been ascribed to chance; nor was it a common thing, that when the Jews had been for four successive years nearly consumed with wants and when the enemy was at hand, they should see the land now fruitful, that they should see it freed from destructive insects, that they should be also at peace, and not disturbed by the dread of any foreign enemy. Since the Lord, then, would beyond hope give them a serene instead of a turbulent sky, should not such a wonderful change deeply affect them? This is what the Prophet now means, — "As the Lord will deal with you wonderfully, there will be no excuse for your torpidity, if ye will not be diligent in praising his name."

Not ashamed, he says, shall my people be for ever. The Jews are here reminded by implication of their former disgrace; for they had been greatly confounded; though enemies touched them not, no, not even with their finger, they yet died through famine; an enemy was also prepared, as we have seen, to destroy them. They were therefore frightened with dread,

and also perplexed with their own evils, by which God had almost worn them out. The Prophet says now, *My people shall not be ashamed for ever*, intimating that God would at length relieve his people from their evils, that they might not, as hitherto, be ashamed. He at last subjoins —

<290227> JOEL 2:27	
27. And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed.	27. Et cognoscetis, quia in medio Israel ego, et ego Jehova Deus vester, et nullus praeterea: et non pudefiet populus meus in seculum.

He repeats the same sentence; and in the beginning of the verse he unfolds what I have already said — that the miracle would be such as to constrain the people to praise God. *Ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel:* and this was the case, because God showed not in an ordinary way his kindness to them, and especially because it had been foretold, and also because this reason had been adduced — that God was mindful of his covenant. The manner, then, in which he dealt with them, and farther, the prediction itself, left to the people no pretext for ignorance. Hence the Prophet now says, ‘Ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel,’ and still more, ‘that I am Jehovah your God.’ By these words the Prophet reminds us, that the deliverance of the people from their evils was to be wholly ascribed to the gratuitous mercy of God; for we have already seen, that things would have been past hope, had not this consolation been added — ‘Turn ye even now to me.’ The Prophet therefore repeats, that there would be no other reason why God would deal so kindly with his people, and so mercifully spare them, but this — that he dwelt in the midst of Israel: but whence was this dwelling, except that God had gratuitously chosen this people? This indeed availed much to raise up the people; for how could they have hoped that God would be propitious to them, had they not been reminded of this truth that God was dwelling in the midst of them? Not because they were worthy, but because he deigned to come down to them.

He afterwards adds, *And none else*. By this sentence the Prophet more sharply stimulates them to return immediately to God; for if they deferred

longer disappointment would be in delay. That the Jews, then, might not, after their usual manner, procrastinate, he says that there is no other God; and thus he shows that there was no remedy for their evils, except they sought to be reconciled to God. “There is then no God besides me, and I dwell in the midst of thee.” The Lord claims to himself every power, and then kindly invites the people to himself, and for this reason, — because he dwells in the midst of them. That the people, then, might not form other expectations, God shows that all their hope was in him alone. He farther shows, that salvation was not to be sought afar off, provided the people had not forgotten the covenant, that God was dwelling in the midst of them. But a higher doctrine follows —

<290228> JOEL 2:28	
28. And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:	28. Et accidet post sic (hoc est, postea,) effundam Spiritum meum super omnem carnem: et prophetabunt filii vestri et filiae vestrae: senes vestri somnia somnabunt: juvenes vestri (aut, viri electi) visiones videbunt.

We have explained why the Prophet began with earthly blessings. One may indeed think that this order is not regular; for Christ does not in vain remind us, that the kingdom of God ought to be first sought, and that other things shall be added in their place, (<400601> Matthew 6;) for food, and every thing that belongs to this frail life, are, as it were, additions to the spiritual life. But the Prophet designedly mentioned first the evidence of God’s favor in outward benefits; for we see how slow the perceptions of men are, and how slothful they are in seeking spiritual life. As, then, men rise to things above with so much difficulty, the Prophet makes use of the best helps; and we must indeed be dealt with as we usually deal with children. For as there is not so much discernment in them as to be influenced by reasons, we set before them what is suitable to their weak and simple comprehension; so the Prophet did; for he showed first that God would be kind to the Jews in food for the body, and having used this as a help, he then added, *Afterwards I will pour my Spirit upon all flesh.*

By these words the Prophet reminds us, that people act absurdly when they are satisfied with vanishing things, when they ask of God nothing more excellent than to be pampered like brute animals; for in what do the children of God differ from asses and dogs, except they aspire after spiritual life? The Prophet, then, after having set before them lower things, as though they were children, now brings before them a more solid doctrine, (for thus they were to be led,) and affords them a taste of the favor of God in its external signs. “Ascend, then, now,” he says, “to spiritual life: for the fountain is one and the same; though when earthly benefits occupy and engross your attention, ye no doubt pollute them. But God feeds you, not to fill and pamper you; for he would not have you to be like brute animals. Then know that your bodies are fed, and that God gives support to you, that ye may aspire after spiritual life; for he leads you to this as by the hand; be this then your object.” We now, then, understand why the Prophet did not at first speak of the spiritual grace of God; but he comes to it now. He began with temporal benefits, for it was needful that an untutored people should be thus led by degrees, that on account of their infirmity, sluggishness, and dullness, they might thus make better progress, until they understood that God would for this end be a Father to them.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since we want so many aids while in this frail life, and as it is a shadowy life, we cannot pass a moment, except thou dost continually, and at all times, supply through thy bounty what is needful, — O grant, that we may so profit by thy so many benefits, that we may learn to raise our minds upwards, and ever aspire after celestial life, to which by thy gospel thou invites us so kindly and sweetly every day, that being gathered into thy celestial kingdom, we may enjoy that perfect felicity, which has been procured for us by the blood of thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

LECTURE FORTY-FIFTH

And it shall be, that I shall afterwards pour my Spirit upon all flesh, and prophesy shall your sons and your daughters and your old men shall dreams dream, and your young men shall visions see. We mentioned in our last lecture why the Prophet now at length speaks of the spiritual grace of God, having before spoken of earthly blessings. The order may seem indeed irregular; but it can be easily accounted for. The Prophet said first that God, being reconciled to the people, would openly manifest this by external proofs, by restoring abundance of wine and corn; for the almost wearing out of the people by famine and want, being the evidence of God's vengeance, the Prophet made the testimony of reconciliation to be in tokens of a contrary kind. But as the restoration of the Church consists not either in the fruitfulness of the land, or in the abundance of provisions, the Prophet now raises higher the thoughts of the godly, and makes them to look for the spiritual grace of God: hence he says, *I shall afterwards pour my Spirit upon all flesh.*

The Prophet, no doubt, promises here something greater than what the fathers under the Law had experienced. The gift of the Spirit, we know, was enjoyed even by the ancients; but the Prophet promises not what the faithful had before found; but, as we have said, something greater: and this may easily be gathered from the word here used, “pour out;” for שפך *shephek* means not to distill, but to pour forth in great abundance; and God did not pour out his Holy Spirit so abundantly and so largely under the law as after the manifestation of Christ. Since, then, the gift of the Spirit was more copiously given to the Church after the advent of Christ, the Prophet uses here an unwonted expression — that God would pour out his Spirit.

Another circumstance is added, *upon all flesh.* Though the Prophets, as we know, had formerly their colleges, yet they were but few in number. As then the gift of prophecy was rare among the Jews, the Prophets in order to show that God would deal more bountifully to his new Church when restored, says, that he would pour out his Spirit upon all flesh. He then intimates that all in common would be partakers of the gift of the Spirit, and of its rich abundance, while under the law a few had but a sparing taste of it. We now then perceive the design of the Prophet; it was to make a

manifest difference between the state of the ancient people and the state of the new Church, of the restoration of which he now speaks. The comparison is, that God would not only endow a few with his Spirit, but the whole mass of the people, and then that he would enrich his faithful with all kinds of gifts, so that the Spirit would seem to be poured forth in full abundance: *I will then pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.* We hence learn how absurdly the Greek interpreter has rendered this, “I will pour out from my Spirit:” for he diminishes this promise by saying, “From my Spirit,” as though God promised here some small portion of his Spirit; while, on the contrary the Prophet speaks of abundance, and intended to express it.

It follows, *Prophecy shall your sons and your daughters.* The Prophet now proceeds to explain what he had said, unfolding at large what he meant by the expression, “upon all flesh,” which was this, — that the whole people would prophesy, or that the gift of prophecy would be common and prevail every where among all the Jews, in a new and unusual manner. The ancients had also Prophets though in number few; but now the Prophet extends this gift and favor to all orders: Prophecy then shall your sons and your daughters, he says, so that he does not exclude women.

He afterwards mentions two kinds of prophesying, *Your old men shall dreams dream, and your young men shall visions see.* “Young men” mean literally “chosen,” *בחורים* *bechurim*: but as in middle age strength prevails most in man, those who possess vigor and judgment, and as yet retain their strength, are called “chosen:” hence by “chosen” he means those of mature age. When God manifested himself to the Prophets, it was usually done, as we know, by dreams and visions, as it is said in

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Numbers 12: this was, as we may say, the ordinary method. The Prophet now refers to these two modes of communication, and says, that the gift of prophecy would be common to men and women, to the old and those of middle age. We now perceive the import of this verse. There is then no difference between dreams and visions, only the Prophet mentions these two kinds, that readers might better understand, that what the Prophet had stated before generally would be common to all.

But I have already said that this prophecy must be referred to the advent of Christ; for we know that what is here described was not fulfilled until

after Christ appeared in the world: and the Prophet now preaches of the new restoration of the Church, which we know, was suspended until the Gospel was proclaimed. Let us now then see whether God, after Christ was revealed, performed what he had spoken by his Prophet. Peter, in <440201>

Acts 2, says, that this prophecy was fulfilled when the Spirit was sent. But it may be objected, that all were not endued with the gift of prophecy, even when God opened all the treasures of his grace; and Paul says that they were not all prophets even when the Church especially flourished; and experience proves the same. How then could Peter say, that this — that God would pour out his Spirit upon all flesh, was fulfilled? To give a reply to this is not difficult: let us only remember, that the Prophet speaks comparatively, as the Scripture is wont to do. He affirms not in express terms that all would be partakers of this gift, but that in comparison with the ancient Church, this gift would be as it were common, and that it was so is well known: for if any one compares the ancient Church with that abundance which God vouchsafed to his people after Christ's advent, he will certainly find true what I say — that the Spirit of God, who was given only to few under the law, was poured out upon all flesh. True then is what the Prophet says, provided this contrast is to be understood — that God was much more bountiful towards his new Church than formerly towards the fathers: for the Prophets then were not many, but they were many under the gospel.

We must also remember that the Prophet hyperbolically extols the grace of God; for such is our stupidity and dullness, that we can never sufficiently comprehend the grace of God, except it is set forth to us in hyperbolical language; nor is there indeed any excess in the thing itself, if we take a right view of it: but as we hardly understand the hundredth part of God's gifts, when he presents them before our eyes, it was needful to add a commendation, calculated to elevate our thoughts. The spirit of God is then constrained to speak hyperbolically on account of our torpidity or rather carelessness. We need not however to fear, lest our thoughts should go beyond the words; for when God would carry us above the heavens, we can hardly ascend two or three feet.



We now then perceive why the Prophet mentions all flesh without exception: first, there were more Prophets, as I have said, under the gospel than under the law; hence, the comparison is very suitable; — and, secondly the Prophet speaks not here of the public office of teaching, for

he calls those Prophets who had not been called to teach, but who were endued with so much of the light of truth, that they might be compared with the Prophets; and certainly the knowledge which flourished in the primitive Church was such, that the meanest were in many respects equal to the ancient Prophets; for what did God confer on the ancient Prophets except the power of foretelling something to come? It was a special gift, and very limited. Besides these predictions are hardly worthy to be compared with the celestial wisdom made known in the gospel. Faith then after the coming of Christ, if rightly estimated according to its value, far excels the gift of prophecy. And so the Prophet here, not without reason, dignifies with so honorable name those who were private men, and to whom was not intrusted the office of teaching among the people, but who were only illuminated; for their light was much superior to the gift of prophecy in many of those who lived under the law. We now understand what the Prophet means when he makes the Spirit of God to be common, without distinction, to all the godly, so that they possess what excels the gift of prophesying.

Now as to the two kinds of gifts mentioned here, it must be observed, that the Prophet spoke according to what was commonly known among the people: for as the Jews were accustomed to dreams and visions, the Prophet therefore made use of these terms; and this manner of speaking occurs often in the Prophets, and it ought to be borne in mind by us. When they speak of the worship of God, they mention sacrifices, ‘They shall come and bring frankincense and gold; they shall lead camels laden with the wealth of the land.’ In short, in their prophecies they raise altars and build a temple: and yet no such things were seen after Christ appeared: for the Gentiles came not to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices; nay, shortly after the temple was destroyed, there was no altar among them, and the whole legal worship ceased. What then is to be understood by such expressions, as — that people shall come from all places to sacrifice together? Even this — They set forth under a visible form the spiritual worship of God. It is so in this place; as it was the usual way among the ancients that God manifested himself by dreams and visions to the Prophets, so he says, *your old men shall dreams dream, and your young men shall visions see*: but the Prophet no doubt sets forth under these forms of speech that light of knowledge in which the new Church excelled after Christ appeared: he indeed compares the light of faith to prophecy, as we have already stated;

but he accommodates his manner of speaking or his discourse to the comprehension of his people, for he knew whom he addressed. All the Prophets have followed the same rule; ‘There shall be offered a sacrifice,’ says Malachi, ‘from the rising to the setting of the sun.’ What is this sacrifice? The Papists take this for the mass; “Then under the kingdom of Christ there is to be some sacrifice; and we do not now offer to God sheep and calves; it therefore follows, that there is to be the sacrifice of bread and wine:” and this is said, as though the Prophet had thus refinedly philosophized on the word, sacrifice, while he was teaching a rude people according to what they could bear. But what he meant was, that the worship of God would be universal among all nations. The same thing is intended by Joel when he says, *I shall pour forth my Spirit upon all flesh: your old men shall dreams dream, and your young men shall visions see.* We now see the whole meaning of the Prophet. Now it follows —

<290229> JOEL 2:29	
29. And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.	29. Atque etiam super servos et super ancillas in diebus illis effundam Spiritum meum.

As the particle  *gam* amplifies in Hebrew, it seems singular that the Prophet now limits to a few a gift common to all; for he had previously said, “Upon all flesh will I pour out my Spirit;” and now, “Upon servants and handmaids;” and he puts down “Also”. If he had simply said “Upon servants and handmaids will I pour out my Spirit,” there would have been no inconsistency, for it would have been the explanation of his former statement; for we know that what the Prophet says of all men must be taken with exception, inasmuch as many who were unbelievers were without this gift, and even those who before excelled in some sort of divine knowledge; we indeed know that the Jews were blinded, and we also know that not all among the common people were partakers of this excellent gift. There is no doubt, therefore, but that this which is said of “all flesh,” must be limited to the Church. It would not, then, have appeared strange, had the Prophet now added, “Upon servants and handmaids;” but the particles  *ugam*, “And also,” create difficulty: it is a way of speaking to enlarge on what has been said, but here it seems not to enlarge; for to pour out the Spirit upon all the people, is more than to pour it out on servants and

handmaids. The solution is twofold: the particles **וְגַם** *ugam* are sometimes to be taken confirmatively. ‘I have blessed him,’ said Isaac of his son Jacob, ‘and also blessed shall he be.’ So in this place we may take the words of the Prophet to be, *yea surely*, being a repetition serving to confirm what had been said: but I prefer another sense; for the Prophet, I doubt not, meant here to add something more incredible than what he had previously said, “*Upon servants and maid-servants will I pour out my Spirit,*” that is, even upon those who were before Prophets; for they shall be enriched with a new gift, and shall gain increasing knowledge after the restoration of the Church, which is now approaching. We apprehend this to be the meaning of the Prophet. He had promised the grace of the Spirit to the whole body of the faithful, which appears, as I have said, from comparing the ancient state with our own: but now, after having spoken of the mass or the common people, he comes to the Prophets, who were superior to others who before performed the office of teaching, who attained rank and degree in the Church; these also shall gain accessions; that is, “My Spirit shall not only be conspicuous in the ignorant and the common people, but also in the Prophets themselves.”

Surely it is a greater thing when they are taught who were before superior to others, and whom the Lord had set over the Church, and when they appear as new men, after having received a gift which the Lord had not previously conferred on them. When, therefore, new light appears in such men, it is certainly a greater thing than when the Spirit is poured out on the common people. We now then see the Prophet’s meaning as to the servants and the handmaids. ^{f10}

He then repeats, *In those days*, intimating that so sudden and incredible the change will be, that Prophets will seem to have been before untaught men; for a much more excellent doctrine shall be given them. Then God shall so pour out his Spirits that all the ancient prophecies will appear obscure and of no value, compared with the great and extraordinary light which Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, will bring at his rising. And he mentions “handmaids”, for there were, we know, Prophetesses under the Law. Let us now go on —

<290230> JOEL 2:30-31

30. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.

30. Et ponam (statuam) prodigia in coelis et terra, sanguinem et ignem et columnas nubis.

31. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.

31. Sol vertetur in tenebras et luna in sanguinem, antequam veniat dies Jehovae magnus et terribilis.

The Prophet seems here to contradict himself; for he had hitherto promised that God would deal kindly and bountifully with his people; and every thing he has said tended to elevate the spirits of the people and fill them with joy: but now he seems again to threaten them with God's wrath and to strike miserable men with fear; who had not as yet a breathing time; for at the time the Prophet spoke, the Jews, we know, were in the greatest sorrow. What then is his purpose in adding a new cause of grief, as though they had not sorrow and lamentation enough? But it is rather an admonition than a threatening. The Prophet warns them of what would be, lest the faithful should promise themselves some happy condition in this world, and an exemption from all cares and troubles; for we know how prone men are to self-indulgence. When God promises any thing, they flatter themselves and harbor vain thoughts, as though they were beyond the reach of harm, and free from every grief and every evil. Such indulgence the flesh contrives for itself. Hence the Prophet reminds us, that though God would bountifully feed his Church, supply his people with food, and testify by external tokens his paternal love, and though also he would pour out his Spirit, (a token far more remarkable,) yet the faithful would continue to be distressed with many troubles; for God designs not to deal too delicately with his Church on earth; but when he gives tokens of his kindness he at the same time mingles some exercises for patience, lest the faithful should become self-indulgent or sleep on earthly blessings, but that they may ever seek higher things.

We now then understand the Prophet's design: he intends not to threaten the faithful, but rather to warn them, lest they should deceive themselves with empty dreams, or expect what is never to be, that is, to enjoy a happy rest in this world. Besides, the Prophet regards also another thing: we know indeed that men are hardly led to seek the grace of God, except

when they are, as it were, forcibly drawn; hence spiritual life is neglected, and whatever belongs to the celestial kingdom, when we have all kinds of supplies on earth. The Prophet then commends here the spiritual grace of which he speaks, for this reason, — that the condition of men would be miserable, were not the Lord to exhilarate their minds and refresh them with the comfort which we have already noticed. — How so? *There will be prodigies in heaven and on earth, the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood*, and all things shall be in disorder and in horrible darkness. What then would become of men, were not God to shine on them by the grace of his Spirit, to support them under such a confusion in heaven and on earth, and to show himself to be their Father?

We then see that this was added for the fuller commendation of God's grace, that men might know, that they would be much more miserable if God called them not to himself by the shining light of his Spirit. And that this was the Prophet's design, we may learn from the discourse of Christ, which he made to his disciples a short time before his death. They asked what would be the sign of his coming, when he reminded them of the destruction of the temple, (^{<402401>}Matthew 24:1). They thought that he would immediately accomplish that triumph of which they had heard, that they would be made participators of that eternal beatitude of which Christ had so often spoken to them. Christ then warned them not to be deluded with so gross a notion. He spoke of the destruction of Jerusalem, and then declared that all these things would be only the presages of evils — “These,” he says, “shall be only the preludes; for tumults will arise, wars shall be, and all places will be full of calamities; in a word, there will be an immense mass of all evils.” As Christ then corrected the mistake, with which the minds of the disciples were imbued, so the Prophet here checks vain imaginations, lest the faithful should think that Christ's kingdom would be earthly, and fix their minds on corn and wine, on pleasures and quietness, on the conveniences of the present life: I will give you, he says, *prodigies in heaven and on earth blood, fire, and dark clouds; the sun all be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before it shall come — the day of Jehovah, great and terrible.*

We now see why the Prophet adds here this sad catalogue, and how well these things harmonize together, — that God would testify his paternal love by the manifestation of Christ, — and that he would exhibit tokens of his wrath, which would fill the whole world with anxiety and fear.

What he says of blood and darkness is, no doubt, to be taken metaphorically for a disordered state of things; for we know that calamities are often compared to obscurity and darkness. It is the same as though he said, "So great will be the succession of evils, that the whole order of nature will seem to be subverted that the very elements will put on a new form; the sun, which illuminates the earth, will be turned into darkness, the moon into blood; the calamities which shall come will take away every token of God's kindness. Then nothing will remain, but that men, sunk, as it were, in the deepest abyss of all evils, will seek some spark of grace from God and never find it; for heaven will be dark, the earth will be covered with thick darkness." We then see that the Prophet does not express what would be, word for word, nor is he to be understood as speaking, as they say, literally, but he uses a figurative mode of speaking, by which he sets forth such a dreadful state of things, that the very elements would put on a new appearance; for the sun would not any more perform its office, and the moon would refuse its light to the earth. As God, then, would take away all tokens of his favor, so the Prophet, by blood, by darkness and by dark clouds, sets forth metaphorically that sorrows by which the minds of men would necessarily be possessed.

Now if any one asks, why by the coming of Christ was God's wrath more stirred up against men? for this may seem to be without reason. To this I answer, that it was, as it were accidental: for if Christ had been received as he ought to have been, if all embraced him with due reverence, he would have certainly been the giver, not only of spiritual grace, but also of earthly happiness. The felicity of all, then, would have in every respect been made complete by the coming of Christ, had not their wickedness and ingratitude kindled up anew the wrath of God; and we see what a flood of evils burst forth immediately after the preaching of the gospel. Now when we consider how severely God afflicted his people formerly, we cannot but say that much heavier have been the calamities inflicted on the world since the manifestation of Christ, — whence this? Even because the world's ingratitude had arrived to its highest point, as indeed it is at this day: for the light of the gospel has gone forth again, and God has exhibited himself to the world as a Father, and we see how great is the wickedness and perversity of men in rejecting the gifts of God; we see some contemptuously rejecting the Gospel, and others impelled by satanic fury to resist the doctrine of Christ; we see them making a boast of their

blasphemies, and we see them kindled with cruel rage and breathing slaughters against the children of God; we see the world full of ungodly men and of the despisers of God; we see an awful contempt of God's grace prevailing everywhere: we see such an unbridled licentiousness in wickedness, that it ought to make us ashamed of ourselves and weary of our life. Since, then, the world is so ungrateful for such a favor, is it a wonder that God should show more dreadful tokens of his vengeance? For certainly at this day, when we closely examine the condition of the world, we find that all are miserable, and even those who applaud themselves, and whom the world admire as semigods. How can it be otherwise? The common people, doubtless, groan under their miseries, and that because God thus punishes the contempt of his grace, which he has again offered to us, and which is so unworthily rejected. Inasmuch, then, as so base an ingratitude on the part of men has provoked God's wrath, it is no wonder that the sound of his scourges is everywhere heard: for the servant who knows his lord's will and does it not, is worthy, as Christ declares, of heavier stripes, (^{<421201>} Luke 12.) And what happens through the whole world is, that after God has shone by his gospel, after Christ has everywhere proclaimed reconciliation, they now openly fall away, and show that they prefer having God angry than propitious to them: for when the gospel is rejected, what else is it but to declare war against God, and to scorn and not to receive the reconciliation which God is ready to give, and of which he treats of his own accord with men?

It is then no wonder that the Prophet says here, that the world would be full of darkness after the appearance of Christ, who is the Sun of Righteousness, and who has shone upon us with his salvation: but it was, as it were, accidental, that God exhibited himself with so much severity to the world, when yet it was the acceptable time, when it was the day of salvation and of good-will; for the world suffered not that to be fulfilled which God had promised to us by the Prophet Joel, nor received the Spirit of adoption, when they might have safely fled to God; nay, when God was ready to cherish them in his own bosom. But since they were refractory and untractable, it was necessary for God to visit such perverseness in an unusual manner. It is no wonder then that the Prophet says, that *in those days there shall be prodigies in heaven and on earth, for the sun shall be turned into darkness, etc., before it shall come — the day of Jehovah, great and terrible.*

It may be asked what day the Prophet refers to: for he has hitherto spoken of the first coming of Christ; and there seems to be some inconsistency in this place. I answer, that the Prophet includes the whole kingdom of Christ, from the beginning to the end; and this is well understood, and in other places we have stated that the Prophets common speak in this manner: for when the discourse is concerning Christ's kingdom, they sometimes refer to its commencement only, and sometimes they speak of its termination; but they often mark out by one delineation the whole course of the kingdom of Christ, from its beginning to its end; and such is the case here. The Prophet, by saying, 'After those days I will pour out my Spirit,' no doubt meant that this, as we have explained, would be fulfilled when Christ should commence his kingdom, and make it known through the teaching of the gospel: Christ poured out then his Spirit. But as the kingdom of Christ is not for a few days, or for a short time, but continues its course to the end of the world, the Prophet turns his attention to that day or that time, and says, "There shall, in the meanwhile, be the greatest calamities: and whosoever shall not flee to the grace of God shall be very miserable; they shall never find rest nor comfort, nor the light of life, for the world shall be sunk in darkness; and God shall take away from the sun, the moon, the elements, and all other aids, the tokens of his favor; and he will show himself everywhere to be angry and offended with men." The Prophet further shows, that these evils of which he speaks would not be for a few days or a few years, but perpetual; 'Before,' he says, 'the day of Jehovah, great and terrible, shall come.' In short, he means that all the scourges of God, which he had hitherto mentioned, would be, as it were, preparations to subdue the hearts of men, that they might with reverence and submission receive Christ. As, therefore, men carry by nature a high spirit, and cannot bend their neck to recede the yoke of Christ, hence the Prophet says here that they were to be subdued by severe scourges, when God would remove all evidences of his love, and fill heaven and earth with dread. Thus, then, he would in a manner change the hardness and contumacy which is innate in men, that they might know that they had to do with God. And, at the same time, the Prophet reminds them, that unless they were amended by these scourges, something more dreadful remained for them, — the Judge would at last come from heaven, not only to clothe the sun and moon in darkness, but to turn life into death. It would, indeed, be far better for the reprobate to die a hundred times than always to live and thus to sustain eternal death in life itself.

The Prophet then means, that men persisting in their obstinacy shall meet with something more grievous and more ruinous than the evils of this life, for they must all at last stand before the tribunal of the celestial Judge: for the day of Jehovah, great and terrible, will come. He refers, in this sentence, to unbelievers and rebels against God; for when Christ shall come, he will be a Redeemer to the godly; no day in their whole life will shine on them so pleasantly; so far will this day be from bringing terror and fear to them, that they are bidden, while expecting it, to lift up their heads, which is a token of cheerfulness and joy. But as the Prophet Joel's object was to humble the confident pride of the flesh, and as he addressed the refractory and the rebellious, it is no wonder that he sets before them what is terrific and dreadful.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we are now surrounded on every side by so many miseries, and as our condition is such, that amidst groans and continual sorrows, our life could be hardly sustained without being supported by spiritual grace, — O grant, that we may learn to look on the face of thine Anointed, and seek comfort from him, and such a comfort as may not engross our minds, or at least not retain us in the world, but raise our thoughts to heaven, and daily sell to our hearts the testimony of our adoption, and that though many evils must be borne by us in this world, we may yet continue to pursue our course, and to fight and to strive with invincible perseverance, until having at length finished all our struggles, we reach that blessed rest, which has been obtained for us by the blood of thy only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

LECTURE FORTY-SIXTH

<290232> JOEL 2:32

32. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.

32. Et erit, quisquis invocaverit nomen Jehovae liberabitur: quia in monte Sion et in Jerusalem erit evasio, sicuti promisit Jehova, et in residuis quos Jehova vocaverit.

We said yesterday that the Prophet denounced future calamities, that he might thus stimulate men, distressed by many evils, to seek God: we indeed know how tardy we are by nature, except the Lord goads us continually. The subject, then, on which we discoursed yesterday tended to show, that as so many and so grievous calamities would press on the Jews, all would be miserable who fled not to God, and that this consolation only would remain to them in their extreme evils: but now the Prophet seasonably adds, *Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered*. Having then stimulated men to seek God, he now gives them firm assurance of being saved, provided they in sincerity and from the heart fled to God.

This is indeed a remarkable passage, for God declares that the invocation of his name in a despairing condition is a sure port of safety. What the Prophet had said was certainly dreadful, — that the whole order of nature would be so changed, that no spark of light would appear, and that all places would be filled with darkness. What, therefore, he says now is the same as though he declared, that if men called on the name of God, life would be found in the grave. They who seem to be even in despair, and from whom God seems to have taken away every hope of grace, provided they call on the name of God, will be saved, as the Prophet declares, though they be in so great a despair, and in so deep an abyss. This circumstance ought to be carefully noticed; for if any one takes this sentence of the Prophet by itself, though then it would not be frigid, it would not yet be so striking; but when these two things are joined

together, — that God will be the judge of the world, who will not spare the wickedness of men, but will execute dreadful vengeance, — and that yet salvation will be given to all who will call on the name of the Lord, we see how efficacious the promise is; for God offers life to us in death, and light in the darkest grave.

There is, therefore, great importance in the expression, **וְהָיָה** *ueie*, ‘Then it shall be;’ for the copulative is to be regarded as an adverb of time, ‘Then whosoever shall invoke the name of the Lord,’ etc. And he uses the word “deliver;” for it was needful to show that the saved differ nothing from the lost. Had the Prophet used the word “preserve,” he would have spoken less distinctly; but now when he promises deliverance, he bids us to set up this shield against trials even the heaviest; for God possesses power sufficiently great to deliver us, provided only we call on him.

We now then understand what the Prophet had in view: He shows that God would have us to call on him not only in prosperity, but also in the extreme state of despair. It is the same as though God had called to himself the dead, and declared that it was in his power to restore life to them and bring them out of the grave. Since then God invites here the lost and the dead, there is no reason why even the heaviest distresses should preclude an access for us or for our prayers; for we ought to break through all these obstacles. The more grievous, then, our troubles are, the more confidence we ought to entertain; for God offers his grace, not only to the miserable, but also to those in utter despair. The Prophet did not threaten a common evil to the Jews, but declared that by the coming of Christ all things would be full of horror: after this denunciation he now subjoins, ‘Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered.’

But as Paul cites this place in Romans 10, and extends it to the Gentiles, we must inquire in what sense he takes the testimony of the Prophet. Paul means to prove that adoption was common to the Gentiles, that it was lawful for them to flee to God, and familiarly to invoke him as a Father: ‘Whosoever,’ he says, ‘shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’ He hence proves that the Gospel ought to have been preached even to the Gentiles, as invocation arises from faith: for except God shines on us by his word, we cannot come to him; faith, then, is ever the mother of prayer. Paul seems to lay stress on the universal particle, *Whosoever*; as though he said, that Joel did not speak of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles, that

he testified that God would indiscriminately, and without exception, receive all who would seek him. But Paul appears to misapply the Prophet's words; for Joel no doubt addresses here the people, to whom he was appointed as a teacher and prophet. What Paul then applies generally to all mankind seems not to have been so intended by the Prophet. But to this there is an easy answer; for the Prophets after having spoken of the kingdom of Christ, had no doubt this truth in view, that the blessing in the seed of Abraham had been promised to all nations; and when he afterwards described the miserable state in which the whole world would be, he certainly meant to rouse even the Gentiles, who had been aliens from the Church, to seek God in common with his elect people: the promise, then, which immediately follows, is also addressed to the Gentiles, otherwise there would be no consistency in the discourse of the Prophet. We therefore see that Paul most fitly accommodates this place to his subject: for the main thing to be held is this, that the blessing in Christ was promised not only to the children of Abraham but also to all the Gentiles. When, therefore, the Prophet describes the kingdom of Christ, it is no wonder that he addresses the Jews and Gentiles in common: and then, what he said of the state of the world, that it would be full of horrible darkness, undoubtedly refers, not to the Jews only, but also to the Gentiles. Why was this done, except to show that nothing else remains for them but to flee to God? We then see that an access is here opened to the Gentiles that they may with one consent call on God together with the Jews.

If there is promised salvation and deliverance to all who shall call on the name of the Lord, it follows as Paul reasons that the doctrine of the Gospel belongs to the Gentiles also; for their mouths must have otherwise been closed, yea, and the mouths of us all: had not God himself anticipated us by his word, and exhorted us to pray, we must have been dumb. It would have been a great presumption in us to present ourselves before God, except he had given us confidence and promised to hear us. If then the liberty of praying is common to all, it follows that the doctrine of salvation is common to all. We must now also add, that *as deliverance is promised to all who shall call on the name of God*, his own power is taken from God, when salvation is sought in any other but in him alone: and we know that this is an offering which he claims exclusively for himself. If,

then, we desire to be delivered, the only remedy is, to call on the name of Jehovah.

He afterwards adds, *For in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as Jehovah has promised.* The Prophet here intimates, that though the people might seem apparently to have been destroyed, yet God would be mindful of his covenant so as to gather the remnant. Such, indeed, was the slaughter of the people, that no hope whatever, according to the flesh, remained; for they were scattered through various parts of the world; there was no social body, no distinct nation, no civil government, no worship of God. Who, then, could have thought that the Church of God would survive? Nay, the probability was, that after thirty or fifty years, the name of Abraham and of his seed would have become wholly extinct; for they had joined in one body with the Chaldees and the Assyrians. That scattering then was, as it were, the death of the whole nation. But God, by Joel, declares here, that there would yet be *deliverance in mount Zion and in Jerusalem*; that is, “Though I shall for a time exterminate this people, that the land may remain desolate, there shall yet be a restoration, and I will again gather a certain body, a Church, on mount Zion and in Jerusalem.” This is the substance.

We learn from this place, that however much God may afflict his Church, it will yet be perpetuated in the world; for it can no more be destroyed than the very truth of God, which is eternal and immutable. God indeed promises, not only that the state of the Church shall be perpetual, but that there will be, as long as the sun and moon shall shine in heaven, some people on earth to call on his name. Since it is so, it follows, that the Church cannot be utterly subverted or wholly perish, however severely and heavily the Lord may chastise it. However great then the scattering of the Church may be, the Lord will yet gather members, that there may be a people on earth to show, that he who is in heaven is true and faithful to his promises. And this truth deserves a careful attention; for when we see the Church scattered, immediately this doubt creeps into our minds, “Does God intend wholly to destroy all his people, — does he mean to exterminate all the seed of the faithful?” Then let this passage be remembered, “In mount Zion there will be deliverance,” after the Lord shall have punished the profane despisers of his name, who abused his patience, and falsely professed his name.

But he adds, *As Jehovah has promised*, which serves for confirmation; for the Prophet bids us here to regard God rather than our own state. When indeed we believe our eyes, we cannot but think sometimes that it is all over with the Church; for when God inflicts heavy punishment on his servants, there seems to us no remedy; and when we believe the diseases of the Church to be incurable, our hearts immediately fail us, except God's promise comes to our minds. Hence the Prophet recalls our thoughts to God, as though he had said, "Judge not of the safety of the Church by sight, but stand and rely on the word of God: he has spoken, he has said, that the Church shall be perpetual." Let us plant our foot on this promise, and never doubt but that the Lord will perform what he has declared.

But it is subjoined by the Prophet as a sort of correction, *And in the remnant whom Jehovah shall call*: and it was necessary to state this distinctly, lest hypocrites, as they usually do, abuse what had been said. They who occupy high stations in the Church, and pass in name for the children of God, swell, we know, with great confidences and boldly trifle with God; for they think that he is bound to them, when they make a show either of external badges or of profession, in which they glory before men: they think this display sufficient. We may indeed gather from many parts of Scripture, that the Jews were inflated with this false presumption of the flesh, that they imagined God to be bound to them. Hence the Prophet shows, that he did not address all the Jews indiscriminately, because many of them were spurious children of Abraham, and had become degenerated. If then under this pretense alone they wished to lay hold on the promise of salvation, the Prophet shows that they were excluded from the Church of God, since they were not legitimate children, after having departed from the faith and piety of their father Abraham. He therefore mentions *remnant*: and by this word he means, in short, that the whole multitude could not be saved, but only a small number.

When therefore we speak of the salvation of the Church, we ought not to gather into one bundle all who profess themselves to be the children of God; for we see that hardly one in a hundred worship God in truth and without hypocrisy, for the greater part abuse his name. We see, at this day, how dishonest is the boasting of the Papists; for they think that the Church of God dwells among them, and they scorn us because we are few. When we say that the Church of God is to be known by the word and the pure administration of the sacraments, "Indeed," they say, "could God

have forsaken so many people among whom the gospel has been preached?" They think that after Christ has been once made known, his grace remains fixed, and cannot by any means be taken away whatever may be the impiety of men. Since then the Papists so shamefully lay claim to the name of Church, because they are many in number, it is no wonder that the Prophet, who had the same contest with the Jews and Israelites, had here expressly mentioned a *remnant*; as though he said, "In vain do the ungodly boast of God's name, since he regards them not as his people." The same truth we observe in ^{<191501>} Psalm 15, and in ^{<192401>} Psalm 24; where the citizens of the Church are described; they are not those who pride themselves on external symbols, but who worship God with a sincere heart, and deal honestly with their neighbors; such dwell on the mountain of God. It was not a difficult thing for hypocrites to thrust themselves into the sanctuary, and to present there their sacrifices to God; but the Prophet shows that none are owned by God, but those who have a sincere heart and pure hands. So also in this place Joel says, that this Church indeed would be saved, but not the vast multitude, — who then? the remnant only.

But the clause which follows must be noticed, *Whom Jehovah shall call*. We have already seen that the Church of God consists often of a very small number; for God counts not any his children, but those who devote themselves sincerely and from the heart to his service, as Paul says 'Whosoever calls on the name of God, let him depart from iniquity;' and many such are not found in the world.

But it is not enough to hold, that the Church of God is only in the remnant; it must be also added that the remnant abide in God's Church for no other reason but that the Lord has called them. Whence then is it that there is a portion in the Church, which shall remain safe, while the whole world seems to be doomed to destruction? It is from the calling of God. And there is no doubt but that the Prophet means by the word, call, gratuitous election. The Lord is indeed often said to call men, when he invites them by the voice of his gospel; but there is what surpasses that, a hidden call, when God destines for himself those whom he purposes to save. There is then an inward call, which dwells in the secret counsel of God; and then follows the call, by which he makes us really the partakers of his adoption. Now the Prophet means, that those who will be the remnant shall not stand by their own power, but because they have been

called from above, that is, elected. But that the election of God is not to be separated from the outward call, I allow; and yet this order ought to be maintained, that God, before he testifies his election to men, adopts them first to himself in his own secret counsel. The meaning is, that calling is here opposed to all human merits, and also to virtue and human efforts; as though he said, “Men attain not this for themselves, that they continue a remnant and are safe, when God visits the sins of the world; but they are preserved by his grace alone, because they have been chosen.” Paul also speaks of the remnant in ^{<451101>}Romans 11, and wisely considers that passage, ‘I have kept for myself seven thousand.’

It is then God’s peculiar province to keep those who fail not: and hence Paul says that they are the remnant of grace; for if God’s mercy were taken away, there would be no remnant among the whole human race. All, we indeed know, are worthy of death, without any difference: it is therefore the election of God alone which makes the difference between some and others. Thus we see that the gratuitous goodness of God is extolled by the Prophet, when he says that a remnant shall be saved, who shall be called by the Lord: for it is not in the power of men to keep themselves unless they are elected; and the gratuitous goodness of God is the security as it were of their salvation. Now follows —

CHAPTER 3

<290301> JOEL 3:1-3	
1. For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem,	1. Quia ecce, diebus illis et tempore illo, quo convertam captivitatem Jehudah et Jerusalem;
2 I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.	2 Et congregabo (tunc congregabo) omnes gentes, et descendere faciam in vallem Jesephat, et disceptabo illic cum ipsis super populo meo et super haereditate mea Israel, quia disperserunt inter gentes et partiti sunt terram meam (addemus et hunc etiam versum.)
3 And they have cast lots for my people; and have given a boy for an harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink.	3 Et super populo meo jecerunt sortem et posuerunt, puerum pro scorto (hoc est, addixerunt pro scorto) et pullam vendiderunt pro vino ut biberunt.

The Prophet confirms in these words what he had before taught respecting the restoration of the Church; for it was a thing difficult to be believed: when the body of the people was so mutilated, when their name was obliterated, when all power was abolished, when the worship of God also, together with the temple, was subverted, when there was no more any form of a kingdom, or even of any civil government, who could have thought that God had any concern for a people in such a wretched condition? It is then no wonder that the Prophet speaks so much at large of the restoration of the Church; he did so, that he might more fully confirm what would have otherwise been incredible.

He therefore says, *Behold, in those days, and at that time, in which I shall restore the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I shall then make all Gentiles to come down into the valley of Jehoshaphat.* And the Prophet says this,

because the Jews were then hated by all people, and were the execration and the dregs of the whole world. As many nations as were under heaven, so many were the enemies of the Jews. A fall then into despair was easy, when they saw the whole world incensed against them: “Though God may wish to redeem us, there are yet so many obstacles, that we must necessarily perish; not only the Assyrians are enraged against us, but we have found even greater hatred in our own neighbors.” We, indeed, know that the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Syrians, the Sidonians, the Idumeans, the Philistines, and, in short, all in the surrounding countries, were very hostile to the Jews. Seeing then every access to their land was closed up to the Jews, it was difficult to entertain any hope of deliverance, though God encouraged them. For this reason the Prophet now says, that God would be the judge of the whole world, and that it was in his purpose and power to call together all the Gentiles, as though he said, “Let not the number and variety of enemies frighten you: the Assyrians alone, I know, are not your enemies, but also all your neighbors; but when I undertake the defense of your cause, I shall be alone sufficient to protect you; and however much all people may oppose, they shall not prevail. Then believe that I shall be a sufficient defender, and shall deliver you from the hand of all the nations.” We now perceive the Prophet’s design when he declares, that God would come to *the valley of Jehoshaphat, and there call together all nations*.

But the Prophet says, *In those days, and at that time, when the Lord shall restore the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem*, etc. This time the Jews limit to their return: they therefore think, that when liberty to return was granted them by Cyrus and Darius, what the Prophet declares here was then fulfilled; Christian doctors apply this prediction to the coming of Christ; but both interpret the words of the Prophet otherwise than the drift of the passage requires. The Prophet, no doubt, speaks here of the deliverance we have just noticed, and at the same time includes the kingdom of Christ; and this, as we have seen in other parts, is very commonly done. While then the prophets testify that God would be the redeemer of his people, and promise deliverance from Babylonian exile, they lead the faithful, as it were, by a continuous train or course, to the kingdom of Christ. For what else was the Jewish restoration, but a prelude of that true and real redemption afterwards effected by Christ? The Prophet then does not speak only of the coming of Christ, or of the return

of the Jews, but includes the whole of redemption, which was only begun when the Lord restored his people from the Babylonian exile; it will then go on from the first coming of Christ to the last day; as though he said, “When God will redeem his people, it will not be a short or momentary benefit, but he will continue his favor until he shall visit with punishment all the enemies of his Church.” In a word, the Prophet here shows, that God will not be a half Redeemer, but will continue to work until he completes everything necessary for the happy state of his Church, and makes it in every respect perfect. This is the import of the whole.

We also see that the Prophet Haggai speaks in the same manner of the second temple, — that the glory of the second temple shall be greater than that of the first, (^{<370201>}Haggai 2) He, however referred, no doubts to the prophecy of Ezekiel; and Ezekiel speaks of the second temple, which was to be built after the return of the people from exile. Be it so, yet Ezekiel did not confine to four or five ages what he said of the second temple: on the contrary he meant that the favor of God would be continued to the coming of Christ: so also Joel means here, when he says, *When God shall restore the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, he will then call together all the nations*; as though he said, “God will pour out not a small portion of grace, but will become the complete Redeemer of his people; and when the whole world shall rise against him, he will yet prevail; he will undertake the cause of his Church, and will secure the salvation of his people. Whosoever then will attempt to delay or hinder the restoration of the Church, shall by no means succeed; for the Lord, the defender of his people, will judge all nations.”

Let us now see why the Prophet particularly mentions the *valley of Jehoshaphat*. Many think that valley to be intended, which was called the Valley of Blessing, where Jehoshaphat obtained a signal and a memorable victory, when yet he was not provided with large forces, and when many nations conspired against him. Though Jehoshaphat fought against a large army with a few people, he yet wonderfully succeeded; and the people there presented thanks to God, and gave a name to the place. Hence, many think that this valley is mentioned, that the Prophet might remind the Jews how wonderfully they were saved; for their enemies had come for the very purpose of destroying the whole of God’s people, and thought that this was wholly in their power. The memory then of this history must have animated the minds of the godly with a good hope; for God then undertook

the cause of a small number against a vast multitude; yea, against many and powerful nations. And this view seems to me probable. Some place this valley of Jehoshaphat half way between the Mount of Olives and the city; but how probable their conjecture is I know not.

Unquestionably, with regard to this passage, their opinion, in my judgment, is the most correct, who think that there is here a recalling to mind of God's favor, which may in all ages encourage the faithful to entertain hope of their salvation. Some, however, prefer to take the word as an appellative; and no doubt יהושפט *ieushaphath* means the judgment of God; and so they render it, "The valley of the judgment of God." If this is approved I do not oppose. And, doubtless, though it be a proper name, and the Prophet speak here of that holy King, to encourage the Jews to follow his example, he yet alludes, no doubt, to the judgment of God, or to the contest which he would undertake for the sake of his people: for it immediately follows וכ שפתי עמם שם *uneshaphathti omem shim*, "And I will contend with them there:" and this verb is derived from שפט *shephath*. Hence also, if it be the proper name of a place, and taken from that of the King, the Prophet here meant, that its etymology should be considered; as though he said, "God will call all nations to judgment, and for this end, that he may dwell in the midst of his people, and really testify and prove this."

Some apply this passage to the last judgment, but in too strained a manner. Hence also has arisen the figment, that the whole world shall be assembled in the valley of Jehoshaphat: but the world, we know, became infected with such delirious things, when the light of sound doctrine was extinguished; and no wonder, that the world should be fascinated with such gross comments, after it had so profaned the worship of God.^{f11}

But with respect to the intention of the Prophets he, no doubt, mentions here the valley of Jehoshaphat, that the Jews might entertain the hope that God would be the guardian of their safety; for he says everywhere that he would dwell among them, as we have also seen in the last chapter, "And God will dwell in the midst of you." So also now he means the same, *I will assemble all nations, and make them to come down to the valley of JEHOSEPHAT*; that is, though the land shall for a time be uncultivated and waste, yet the Lord will gather his people, and show that he is the judge of the whole world; he will raise a trophy in the land of Judah, which will be

nobler than if the people had ever been safe and entire: for how much soever all nations may strive to destroy the remnant, as we know they did, though few remained; yet God will sit in the valley of Jehoshaphat, he will have there his own tribunal, that he may keep his people, and defend them from all injuries. At the same time, what I have before noticed must be borne in mind; for he names here the valley of Jehoshaphat rather than Jerusalem, because of the memorable deliverance they had there, when God discomfited so many people, when great armies were in an instant destroyed and without the aid of men. Since God then delivered his people at that time in an especial manner through his incredible power, it is no wonder that he records here the name of the valley of Jehoshaphat.

I will contend, he says, *with them there for my people, and for my heritage, Israel*. By these words the Prophet shows how precious to God is the salvation of his chosen people; for it is no ordinary thing for God to condescend to undertake their cause, as though he himself were offended and wronged; and God contends, because he would have all things in common with us. We now then, see the reason of this contention, — even because God so regards the salvation of his people, that he deems himself wronged in their person; as it is said in another place, “He who toucheth you toucheth the apple of mine eye”. And to confirm his doctrine still more, the Prophet adds, *For mine heritage, Israel*. God calls Israel here his heritage, to strengthen distressed minds, and also to comfort them; for if the Jews had only fixed their minds on their own state, they could not but think themselves unworthy of being regarded by God; for they were deemed abominable by all nations; and we also know that they were severely chastised for having departed from all godliness and for having, as it were, wholly alienated themselves from God. Since, then, they were like a corrupted body, they could not but despond in their adversity: but the Prophet here comes to their assistance, and brings forward the word heritage, as though he said, “God will execute judgment for you, not that ye are worthy, but because he has chosen you: for he will never forget the covenant which he made with your father Abraham.” We see, then, the reason he mentions heritage: it was, that the Jews might not despair on account of their sins; and at the same time he commends, as before, the gratuitous mercy of God, as though he had said, “The reason for your redemption is no other, but that God has allotted to himself the posterity

of Abraham and designed them to be his peculiar people.” What remains we must defer until to-morrow.

PRAYER

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou not only invites us continually by the voice of thy Gospel to seek thee, but also offerest to us thy Son as our Mediator, through whom an access to thee is open, that we may find thee a propitious Father, — O grant, that relying on thy kind invitation, we may through life exercise ourselves in prayer: and as so many evils disturb us on all sides, and so many wants distress and oppress us, may we be led more earnestly to call on thee, and, in the meantime, be never wearied in this exercise of prayer; that, being through life heard by thee, we may at length be gathered to thy eternal kingdom, where we shall enjoy that salvation Which thou hast promised to us, and of which also thou daily testifiest to us by thy Gospel, and be for ever united to thy only begotten Son, of whom we are now members; that we may be partakers of all the blessings, which he has obtained for us by his death. Amen.

LECTURE FORTY-SEVENTH.

We said in our yesterday's Lecture, that God proves the singular love he has to his Church by condescending to undertake her cause, and contend as a worldly man would do for his paternal inheritance. He says, that *his heritage, Israel, had been dispersed among the nations*; as though he said, that it was an intolerable thing that enemies should, like robbers, thus divide his heritage. He speaks first of the people, then of the land; for God, as it is well known, consecrated the land to himself, and he would not have it occupied by profane nations. There was then a twofold sacrilege, — the people were carried away into distant lands, and others were sent to inhabit and possess their land, which God had destined for his children and elect people.

There follows now another indignity still greater; for they cast lot on God's people, — *On my people they have cast lot, and prostituted a boy for a harlot, and a girl have they sold for wine, that they might drink*. By these words the Prophet enhances the injury done them; for the Jews had been reproachfully treated. Some measure of humanity is mostly shown when men are sold; but the Prophet here complains in the person of God, that the Jews had been exposed to sale, as though they were the offscourings of mankind, and of no account. They have cast lots he says; and this was to show contempt; and the Prophet expresses more clearly what he meant, and says, that a *boy had been given for a harlot, and a girl for wine*. Some consider the Prophet as saying, that boys were prostituted to base and scandalous purposes; but I prefer another view, — that the enemies sold them for a mean price to gratify their gluttony, or their lust; as though the Prophet had said, that the Jews had to endure a grievous reproach by being set to sale, as they say, and that at the lowest price. He farther adds another kind of contempt; for whatever price the enemies procured by selling, they spent it either on harlot or on feasting. We hence see that a twofold injury is here mentioned, — the Jews had been so despised as not to be regarded as men, and had been sold not for the usual prices, but had been disposed of in contempt by their enemies almost for nothing; — and the other reproach was, that the price obtained for them was afterwards spent on gluttony and whoredom: yet this people was sacred to God. Now this contumelious treatment, the Prophet says, God

would not endure, but would avenge such a wrong as if done to himself. This is then the meaning.

But the reason which induces me thus to interpret the Prophet is because he says that a girl was sold for wine, as the boy for a harlot; and the construction of the Prophet's words is the same. It is indeed certain that in the latter clause the Prophet meant nothing else but that the price was wickedly spent for vile and shameful purposes; then the former clause must be understood in the same way. Let us proceed —

<290304> JOEL 3:4-6	
4. Yea, and what have ye to do with me, O Tyre, and Zidon, and all the coasts of Palestine? will ye render me a recompence? and if ye recompense me, swiftly and speedily will I return your recompence upon your own head;	4. Atque etiam, quid vobis mecum Tyre et Sidon, et cuncti termini Palestinae? An mercedem vobis rependitis mihi? Etsi confertis hoc in me, velox (subito) rependam mercedem vestram in caput vestrum;
5. Because ye have taken my silver and my gold, and have carried into your temples my goodly pleasant things:	5. Quia argentum meum et aurum meum abstulistis, et desiderabilia mea bona transtulistis in templa vestra (alii, palatia.)
6. The children also of Judah and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their border.	6. Et filios Jehudah et filios Jerusalem vendidistis filiis Graecorum, ut elongaretis eos a termino suo (hoc est, procul abduceretis eos a finibus suis.)

God expostulates here with Tyre and Sidon, and other neighboring nations, and shows that they vexed his people without cause Had they been provoked some excuse might have been made; but since they made war of their own accord, the wrong was doubled. This is what God means these words. *What have ye to do with me, O Tyre and Sidon?* He indeed continues the subject before explained: but he speaks of the concern here as hid own; he seems not now to undertake the protection of his own people, but detents his own cause. “What have ye to do with me?” he

says. God then interposes himself; as though he said, that the Syrians and Sidonians were not only called by him to judgment because they had unjustly wronged his people, and brought many troubles on men deserving no such things; but he says also, that he stood up in his own defense. “What have I to do with you, O Syrians and Sidonians?” as we say in French, *Qu’avons-nous à desmeller?* (what have we to decide?) Now the Prophet had this in view, that the Syrians and Sidonians became voluntary enemies to the Jews, when they had no dispute with them; and this, as we have said, was less to be borne. “What then have ye to do with me, O Syrians and Sidonians? Do I owe anything to you? Am I under any obligation to you? Do ye repay me my recompense?” that is, “Can you boast of any reason or just pretense for making, war on my people?” He then means, that there had been no wrong done to the Syrians and Sidonians, which they could now retaliate, but that they made an attack through their own wickedness, and were only impelled by avarice or cruelty thus to harass the miserable Jews: “Ye repay not,” he says, “a recompense to me; for ye cannot pretend that any wrong has been done to you by me.”

But if ye repay this to me, he says, I will swiftly return the recompense on your head. גִּמֵּל *gimel* means not only to repay, as the Hebrew scholars ever render it, but also to confer, to bestow, (*conferre, ut loquuntur Latine*) as it has been stated in another place. ‘What shall I repay to the Lord for all the things which he has recompensed to me?’ This is the common version; but it is an improper and inconsistent mode of speaking. David no doubt refers to God’s benefits; then it is, ‘What shall I repay for all the benefits which the Lord has bestowed on me?’ Then he who first does wrong, or bestows good, is said to recompense; and this is the sense in this place. ‘If ye,’ he says, ‘thus deal with me, “*swiftly*”, מִהֲרָה *mere* suddenly (for the word is to be taken as an adverb,) will I return recompense on your head;’ that is, “Ye shall not be unpunished, since ye have acted so unjustly with me and my people.” We now perceive the whole meaning of the Prophet: He enhances the crime of the Syrians and Sidonians, because they willfully distressed the Jews, and joined themselves to their foreign enemies, for the purpose of seizing on a part of the spoil. As, then, vicinity softened not their minds, their inhumanity was on this account more fully proved. But, as I have said, the Lord here places himself

between the two parties, to intimate, that he performs his own proper office when he takes care of the safety of his Church.

He afterwards shows that this wickedness should not be unpunished — *If ye deal thus with me, he says, I shall swiftly (suddenly) return the recompense on your heads.* This passage contains a singular consolation; for God declares that whatever evils the faithful endure belong to him, and also that he will not suffer those under his protection and defense to be distressed with impunity, but will quickly return recompense on the heads of those who unjustly injure his heritage. We now understand the Prophet's design: he doubtless intended to support the minds of the godly with this thought, — that their afflictions are objects of concern with God and that he will shortly be the avenger of them, however necessary it may be that they should for a time be thus violently and reproachfully treated by wicked men.

Let us now proceed: He says that their *silver* and their *gold* had been taken away by the Syrians and the Sidonians. All who were the neighbors of that people, no doubt, derived gain from their calamity, as is usually the case. They were at first ill disposed towards them; there was then a new temptation; they gaped after booty: and they showed themselves openly their enemies, when they saw that there was hope of gain. Such was the case with the Syrians and Sidonians. There is no doubt, but that they sedulously courted the favor of the Assyrians, that they helped them with provisions and other things, that they might partake of the spoil. It was, therefore, no wonder that gold and silver was taken away by them, for the carriage of them to Assyria would have been tedious: and, as I have just hinted, it is usually the case, that conquerors gratify those by whom they have been assisted. Many extend this plunder generally to the whole wealth of the people; that is, that the enemies plundered what gold and silver there was in Judea, and that the Sidonians got a portion of it for themselves. But there seems to have been a special complaint, that the sacred vessels of the temple were taken away by the Syrians and Sidonians: I therefore prefer to render the word, temples, rather than palaces. Some say, 'Ye have carried away my silver and my gold to your palaces.' Though the word is capable of two meanings, yet the Prophet, I have no doubt, refers here to the temples. The Syrians, then, and the Sidonians profaned the silver and the gold of the temple by dedicating them to their idols; they adorned their idols with spoils taken from the

only true God. This was the reason why God was so exceedingly displeased. There was, indeed, a cause why God, as we have said, contended for the whole nation of Israel: but it was a far more heinous wrong to spoil the temple, and to strip it of its ornaments, and then to adorn idols with its sacred vessels; for God was thus treated with scorn; and in contempt of him, the Syrians and Sidonians built, as it were, a trophy of victory in their own dens, where they performed sacrilegious acts in worshipping fictitious gods.

Ye have taken away, he says, *my gold and silver, and my desirable good things*. God speaks here after the manner of men; for it is certain that even under the law he stood in no need of gold or silver, or of other precious things; he wished the temple to be adorned with vessels and other valuable furniture for the sake of the ignorant (*rudis*—rude) people; for the Jews could not have been preserved in pure and right worship, had not God assisted their weak faith by these helps. (*adminiculis*—props, aids) But yet, as obedience is acceptable to him, he says that whatever was an ornament in the temple was a desirable thing to him; while, at the same time, by speaking thus, he put on, as I have said, a character not his own, as he has no need of such things, nor is he delighted with them. We ought not, indeed, to imagine God to be like a child, who takes delight in gold and silver and such things; but what is said here was intended for the benefit of the people, that they might know that God approved of that worship, for it was according to his command. He therefore calls every thing that was in the temple desirable, *Ye have*, he says, *carried away into your temples my desirable good things*.

It follows, *And the children of Judah, and the children of Jerusalem, have ye sold to the children of the Grecians*^{f12}. There is here another complaint subjoined, — that the Syrians and Sidonians had been sacrilegious towards God, that they had cruelly treated God's afflicted people. In the last verse, God inveighed against the Syrians, and Sidonians for having prostituted to their idols gold and silver stolen from him; he now again returns to the Jews themselves, who, he says, had been sold to the children of the Grecians; that is, to people beyond the sea: for as Javan passed into Europe, he includes under that name the nations beyond the sea. And he says, that they sold the Jews to the Greeks that they *might drive them far from their own borders*, so that there might be no hope of return. Here the cruelty of the Syrians and Sidonians becomes more evident; for they took

care to drive those wretched men far away, that no return to their country might be open to them, but that they might be wholly expatriated.

We now perceive what the Prophet had in view: He intended that the faithful though trodden under foot by the nations, should yet have allayed their grief by some consolation, and know that they were not neglected by God; and that though he connived at their evils for a time, he would yet be their defender, and would contend for them as for his own heritage, because they had been so unjustly treated. He afterwards adds —

<290307> JOEL 3:7	
7. Behold, I will raise them out of the place whither ye have sold them, and will return your recompense upon your own head:	7. Ecce ego excitabo eos e loco in quem vendidistis eos, et rependam mercedem vestram in caput vestrum.

The Prophet declares here more fully and expressly, that God had not so deserted the Jews, but that he intended, in course of time, to stretch forth his hand to them again. It was indeed a temporary desertion: but it behaved the faithful in the meantime to rely on this assurance, — that God purposed again to restore his people: and of this the Prophet now speaks, *Behold*, he says, *I will raise them from the place unto which ye have sold them*; as though he said “*Neither distance of place, nor the intervening sea, will hinder me from restoring my people.*” As then the Syrians and Sidonians thought that the Jews were precluded a return to their country, because they were taken away into distant parts of the world, God says that this would be no obstacle in his way to collect again his Church.

But it may be asked, When has this prediction been fulfilled? as we indeed know that the Jews have never returned to their own country: for shortly after their return from exile, they were in various ways diminished; and at length the most grievous calamities followed, which consumed the greatest part of the people. Since this then has been the condition of that nation, we ought to inquire whether Christ has collected the Jews, who had been far dispersed. We indeed know that they were then especially scattered; for the land of Judea never ceased to be distressed by continual wars until Jerusalem was destroyed, and the people were almost wholly consumed. Since then it has been so, when can we say that this prediction has been

fulfilled? Many explain the words allegorically, and say, that the Prophet speaks of apostles and martyrs, who, through various persecutions, were driven into different parts; but this is a strained view. I therefore do not doubt, but that here he refers to a spiritual gathering: and it is certain that God, since the appearance of Christ, has joined together his Church by the bond of faith; for not only that people have united together in one, but also the Gentiles, who were before alienated from the Church, and had no intercourse with it, have been collected into one body. We hence see, that what the Prophet says has been spiritually fulfilled; even the *children of Judah and the children of Jerusalem* have been redeemed by the Lord, and restored again, not on foot or by sea; for Jerusalem has been built everywhere as it is said in Zechariah.

I will therefore gather them, he says; and he adds, *I will return recompense on your head*. He again confirms what he said before, — that though the ungodly should exult, while ruling over the children of God, their cruelty would not be unpunished; for they shall find that the Church is never neglected by God; though he may subject it to various troubles, and exercise its patience, and even chastise it, he will yet be ever its defender. It follows —

<290308> JOEL 3:8	
8. And I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the children of Judah, and they shall sell them to the Sabaeans, to a people far off: for the LORD hath spoken it.	8. Et vendam filios vestros et filias vestras in manum filiorum Jehadah, et vendent eos Sabaeis, genti lonquinquae, quia Jehovah loquutus est.

The Prophet describes here a wonderful change: the Syrians and Sidonians did sell the Jews; but who is to be the seller now? God himself will take this office, — *I*, he says, *will sell your children*, as though he said, “The Jews shall subdue you and reduce you to bondage,” — by whose authority? “It shall be, as if they bought you at my hands.” He means that this servitude would be legitimate; and thus he makes the Jews to be different from the Syrians and Sidonians, who had been violent robbers, and unjustly seized on what was not their own: and hence the manner of the sale is thus described, — “I myself shall be the author of this change,

and the thing shall be done by my authority, as if I had interposed my own name;" and the Jews themselves shall sell, he says, your sons and your daughters to the Sabeans, a distant nation; that is, the people of the East: for the Prophet, I doubt not, by mentioning a part for the whole, meant here to designate Eastern nations, such as the Persians and Medes; but he says, that the Tyrians and Sidonians shall be driven to the meet distant countries; for the Sabeans were very far distant from the Phoenician Sea, and were known as being very nigh the Indians. ^{f13}

But it may be asked here, When has God executed this judgment? for the Jews never possessed such power as to be able to subdue neighboring nations, and to sell them at pleasure to unknown merchants. It would indeed be foolish and puerile to insist here on a literal fulfillment: at the same time, I do not say, that the Prophet speaks allegorically; for I am disposed to keep from allegories, as there is in them nothing sound nor solid: but I must yet say that there is a figurative language used here, when it is said, that the Syrians and Sidonians shall be sold and driven here and there into distant countries, and that this shall be done for the sake of God's chosen people and his Church, as though the Jews were to be the sellers. When God says, "I will sell," it is not meant that he is to descend from heaven for the purpose of selling, but that he will execute judgment on them; and then the second clause, — that they shall be sold by the Jews, derives its meaning from the first; and this cannot be a common sake, as if the Jews were to receive a price and make a merchandise of them. But God declares that the Jews would be the sellers, because in this manner he signifies his vengeance for the wrong done to them; that is, by selling them *to the Sabeans, a distant nation*. We further know, that the changes which then followed were such that God turned upside down nearly the whole world; for he drove the Syrian and the Sidonians to the most distant countries. No one could have thought that this was done for the sake of the Jews, who were hated and abominated by all. But yet God declares, that he would do this from regard to his Church even sell the Syrians and the Sidonians, though it was commonly unknown to men; for it was the hidden judgment of God. But the faithful who had been already taught that God would do this, were reminded by the event how precious to God is his heritage, since he avenges those wrongs, the memory of which had long before been buried. This then is the import of the whole. The Prophet now subjoins —

<290309> JOEL 3:9-11

9. Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up:

9. Publicate hoc in Gentibus, sanctificate proelium, excitate robustos, venient, ascendent omnes viri bellatores.

10. Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong.

10. Concidite vomeres vestros in gladios et falces vestras in lanceas; debilis dicat, Ego sum robustus.

11. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O LORD.

11. Congregamini et venite omnes gentes, congregamini in circuitu (hoc est, undique congregamini;) illic prosteruet Jehova fortes tuos.

Some think these words were announced lest the people, being terrified by their evils, should become wholly dejected; and they elicit this meaning, — that God placed this dreadful spectacle of evils before their eyes, that the Jews might prepare and strengthen themselves for enduring them; that though nations should everywhere rise up, they might yet abide arm in the hope, that God would be the defender of his own Church. But the Prophet, I doubt not, continues the same discourse, and denounces war on the heathen nations, who had molested the Church with so many troubles; *Publish this*, he says, *among the nations, proclaim war, rouse the strong; let them come, let them ascend*: and we know how necessary it was by such means to confirm what he had previously said: for the ungodly are moved by no threats, nay, they laugh to scorn all God's judgments; while the faithful yielding to their evils, can hardly raise up their minds, even though God promises to be a helper to them. Except, then, the matter had been set forth as painted before their eyes they would not have experienced the power of consolation. Hence the lively representation we see here was intended for this end, — that the people, being led to view the whole event, might entertain hope of their future salvation, while they now saw God collecting his army, and mustering his forces to punish the enemies of his Church. The faithful, then not only hearing by mere words that this would be, but also seeing, as it were, with their eyes what the Lord sets forth by a figure, and a lively representation, were more

effectually impressed and felt more assured that God would become at length their deliverer.

We now then see why the Prophet here bids war to be everywhere announced and proclaimed, and also why he bids the strong to assemble, and all warlike men to ascend; as though he said, “The Lord will not disappoint you with empty words, but will come provided with an army to save you. When ye hear, then, that he will be the author of your salvation, think also that all nations are in his power, and that the whole world can in a moment be roused up by his rod, so that all its forces may from all quarters come together, and all the power of the world meet in obedience to him. Know, then, that being provided with his forces, he comes not to you naked, nor feeds you with mere words, as they are wont to do who have no help to give but words only: this is not what God does; for he can even to-day execute what he has denounced; but he stays for the ripened time. In the meanwhile, give him his honor, and know that there is not wanting the means to protect you, if he wished; but he would have you for a time to be subject to the cross and to tribulations that he may at length avenge the wrongs done to you.”

It may be now asked who are the nations meant by the Prophet? for he said before, that God would visit all nations with punishment, whereas, there was then no nation in the world friendly to the Jews. But in this there is nothing inconsistent; for God caused all the enemies of the Church to assail one another on every side, and to destroy themselves with mutual slaughters. Hence, when he designed to take vengeance on the Tyrians and Sidonians, he roused up the Persian and Medes; and when he purposed to punish the Persian and Medes, he called the Greeks into Asia; and he had before brought low the Assyrians. Thus he armed all nations, but each in its turn; and one after the other underwent the punishment they deserved. And so the expression of the Prophet must not be taken in a too restricted sense, as though the Lord would at the same time collect an army from the whole world, to punish the enemies of his Church; but that he rouses the whole world, so that some suffer punishment from others; and yet no enemy of the Church remains unpunished. We now perceive the Prophet’s objects in saying, *Publish this among the nations*; that is, God will move dreadful tumults through the whole world, and will do this for the sake of his Church: for though he exposes his people to many miseries, he will yet have the remnant, as we have before seen, to be saved.

He afterwards adds, *Beat your plowshares into swords*. When Isaiah and Micah prophesied of the kingdom of Christ, they said, ‘Beat your swords into pruninghooks, and your spears into plowshares’, (^{<230201>}Isaiah 2:1, ^{<330401>}Micah 4:1.) This sentence is now inverted by Joel. The words of Isaiah and Micah were intended figuratively to show that the world would be at peace when Christ reconciled men to God, and taught them to cultivate brotherly kindness. But the Prophet says here, that there would be turbulent commotions everywhere, so that there would be no use made of the plough or of the pruninghook; husbandmen would cease from their labor, the land would remain waste; for this is the case when a whole country is exposed to violence; no one dares go out, all desert their fields, cultivation is neglected. Hence the Prophet says, ‘Turn your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears;’ that is, field labor will cease, and all will strenuously apply themselves to war. And *let the weak say, I am strong*, for there will then be no exemption from war. Excuses, we know, availed formerly on the ground of age or disease, when soldiers were collected; and if any one could have pleaded disease, he was dismissed; but the Prophet says, that there will be no exemption then; “God”, he says, “will excuse none, he will compel all to become warriors, he will even draw out all the sick from their beds; all will be constrained to put on arms”. It hence appears how ardently the Lord loves his Church, since he spares no nations and no people, and exempts none from punishment; for all who have vexed the Church must necessarily receive their recompense. Since then God so severely punishes the enemies of his Church, he thereby gives a singular evidence of his paternal love to us.

At length he concludes, *There will Jehovah overthrow thy mighty ones*. Though the Prophet uses the singular number, “thy”, he no doubt refers to the whole earth; as though he said, “Whatever enemies there may be to my people, I will cut them down, however strong they may be.” We now perceive that everything the Prophet has hitherto said has been for this end — to show, that God takes care of the safety of his Church, even in its heaviest afflictions, and that he will be the avenger of wrongs, after having for a time tried the patience of his people and chastised their faults — that there will be a turn in the state of things, so that the condition of the Church will be ever more desirable, even under its greatest evils, than of those whom the Lord bears with and indulges, and on whom he does not so quickly take vengeance.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we are assailed on every side by enemies, and as not only the wicked according to the flesh are incensed against us, but Satan also musters his forces and contrives in various ways to ruin us, — O grant, that we being furnished with the courage thy Spirit bestows, may fight to the end under thy guidance and never be wearied under any evils. And may we, at the same time, be humbled under thy mighty hand when it pleases thee to afflict us and so sustain all our troubles that with a courageous mind we may strive for that victory which thou promises to us, and that having completed all our struggles we may at length attain that blessed rest which is reserved for us in heaven through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

LECTURE FORTY-EIGHTH

<290312> JOEL 3:12

12. Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about.

12. Expergefiant et ascendant gentes ad vallem Josaphat: quia illic sedebo ad judicandum omnes gentes ex circuitu.

The Prophet proceeds with the same subject, — that God will at length become an avenger of the wrongs of his people, when they shall be unjustly harassed by profane men. We indeed know that God does not immediately succor his servants but rests as though he did not regard their troubles; but this he does to try their patience; and then at a suitable time he declares that he had not been indifferent, but had noticed the evils done to them, and deferred punishment until the wickedness of his enemies had been completed. So he says now, that God will at length be the defender of his people against all the nations assembled from every quarter in the valley of Jehoshaphat. Of this valley we have said enough already. But the chief thing is, that the afflictions of the Church shall not go unpunished; for God at the right time will ascend his tribunal, and cause all nations from every part of the earth to assemble and to be there judged. Now it follows

<290313> JOEL 3:13

13. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great.

13. Mittite falcem, quia maturuit messis: venite, descendite, quia plenum est torcular, refertae sunt cuppae, quia multiplicata est malitia ipsorum.

As God defers his judgments when miserable men groan under their burdens, the Prophet uses a form of speech, which represents God as not delaying, but, on the contrary, as hastening to judgment, though this be not perceived by carnal minds; for these two things well agree together — God

waiting his opportunity as to the ungodly and suspending the punishment they deserve — and yet quickly accelerating their destruction; for he is said to defer with respect to men, because one day with us is like a hundred years; and he is said to hasten, because he knows the exact points of time. So he says in this place, *Put forth the sickle, for the harvest has ripened*. He uses metaphorical words, but he afterwards expresses without a figure what he means and says, that *their wickedness had multiplied*.

But there are here two metaphors, the one taken from the harvest, and the other from the vintage. The Prophet calls those reapers who have been destined to execute his judgment; for God makes use as it were of the hired work of men, and employs their hands here and there as he wills. He afterwards adds another metaphor, taken from the vintage, *Full*, he says, *are the presses and the vats overflow*; and at last he expresses what they mean, — that their wickedness had multiplied, that is, that it was overflowing. God said to Abraham, that the wickedness of the Canaanites was not then completed; and long was the space which he mentioned for he said that after four hundred years he would take vengeance on the enemies of his people: that was a long time; and Abraham might have objected and said “Why should God rest for so long a time?” The answer was this, — that their wickedness was not as yet completed. But the Prophet says here, that their wickedness had multiplied; he therefore gives to God’s servants the hope of near vengeance, as when the harvest approaches and the vintage is nigh at hand; for then all have their minds refreshed with joy. Such is the Prophet’s design; to encourage the faithful in their hope and expectation of a near deliverance, he declares that the iniquities of their enemies had now reached their full measure, so that God was now ready to execute on them his vengeance. This is the purport of the whole. It follows —

<div>◀290314▶</div> <div>JOEL 3:14</div>	
<div>14. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.</div>	<div>14. Populi, populi in vale concisionis (vel, tribulae,) quia propinquus dies Jehovae in valle concisionis.</div>

The Prophet confirms the same truth; but he multiplies words, because the devastation of the Church might have taken away all hope from God's servants; for who could have said that the Church could be restored when it was so miserably wasted, yea, almost reduced to nothing? For the people were so scattered that the name of Israel was of no account. The people then had ceased to exist, for they had lost their name; in short, the constitution of the Church was dissolved, and all might have said, that the people were given up to thousand modes of destruction, as all execrated the name of Israel. Since it was so, whatever the Prophets said of the restoration of the people might certainly have seemed incredible. The repetition then is not superfluous, when the Prophet in various forms of words testifies and affirms that God would abide faithful, and that, though Israel should perish according to what men could see, yet God had power enough to vivify the people when dead: hence the Prophet speaks emphatically, *Nations! Nations!* for he assumes here the character of a herald, as indeed this office had been committed to him, and shows that his predictions would not be fruitless, that he declared not words which would vanish into air, but that whatever he declared in God's name was full of power and energy. It might indeed have appeared ridiculous in the Prophet to summon all nations since his doctrine was laughed to scorn, even at Jerusalem. How could his voice penetrate to the utmost borders of the world and be there heard? Though hidden then was the power of this prediction, it yet showed itself at last, and it was really made evident that the Prophet spoke not in vain.

Besides, he addresses the nations as though they could hear; but he raises thus his voice, and nobly triumphs over all the wicked for the sake of the godly, though the wicked then proudly ruled and with high disdain: "They shall come," he says, "at length before God's tribunal, though they now tread the Church under foot; yea, the nations, the nations." He does not now mention the valley of Jehoshaphat, but of concision. **חֲרוּץ** *cheruts* some take for a fixed decree; but the word means a sledge or an instrument for threshing. We know not the mode of threshing used by the Jews, but it is evident from several passages that **חֲרוּץ** *cheruts* was an instrument with which they were wont to thresh; and I am inclined to adopt this sense; for the Prophet had first called God's judgment a harvest, then he compared it to presses. But if the word "concision" is more approved, I object not; at the same time, I do not doubt but that the Prophet alludes to

threshing, as he ascribes to God his own office, that of scattering nations, who seem now to have conspired for the destruction of the Church. If any one considers it to mean a fixed decree, or a cutting off, as it means in Isaiah, I make no objection; for many give this interpretation. I have, however, explained what I most approve.

As to the drift of the subject, there is no ambiguity; the meaning of the Prophet is, — that God will so punish all the ungodly, that he will cut down and scatter them all, as when the corn is threshed on the floor.

At last he adds, that *nigh was the day of Jehovah in the valley of the sledge*. He intimates, that though God as yet connived at their wickedness, yet the day was coming on, unknown indeed to men, and that he would come at length to that valley, that is, that he would inflict such punishment as would prove that he was the protector of his people. Of this valley we have spoken already; and no doubt he has throughout a reference to it, otherwise he would not have used a suitable language, when he said, *Ascend into the valley*. But what is to ascend into the valley? for, on the contrary, he ought to have spoken of descending. But he compares Judea with other parts of the world; and it is, as it is well known elevated in its situation. Then the higher situation of Judea well agrees with the ascent of which the Prophet speaks. But he ever means that God would so punish the nations as to make it evident that he did this in favor of his Church, as we shall soon see more clearly. But he says —

<290315> JOEL 3:15	
15. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining.	15. Sol et luna obscurabuntur (vel, contrahent nigredinem,) et stellae retrahent splendorem suum.

I have already explained this verse in chapter 2 (<290201> Joel 2:1): the Prophet, as we then stated, describes in these words the terrible judgment of God, in order to shake off the indifference of men, who carelessly hear and despise all threatening, except the Lord storms their hearts. These figurative expressions then are intended to awaken the ungodly, and to make them know that it is a serious matter when the Lord proclaims his judgment. Let us now go on with the passage —

16. The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.

16. Et Jehova e Sion rugiet, et e Jerusalem dabit (edat) vocem suam; et contremiscent coeli et terra: et Jehova spes erit populo suo, et fortitudo filiis Israel.

The Prophet explains here more clearly his object, or the end for which he had hitherto spoken of God's judgment; for what we have heard served only to spread terror: but now the Prophet shows that his purpose was to console the faithful, and to give some relief to their troubles and sorrows. This is the reason why he introduces God as roaring from Zion and crying from Jerusalem. Roaring is ascribed to God, inasmuch as he compares himself in another place to a lion, when representing himself as the faithful protector of the salvation of his people: "I will be," he says, "like the lion, who suffers not the prey to be taken from him, but boldly defends it with all the fierceness he possesses: so also will I do, I will not suffer my people to be taken from me." In this sense does the Prophet now say, that *God will roar from Zion*. God had been for a time despised; for the nations had prevailed against his chosen people, and plundered them at their pleasure; and God then exercised not his power. Since God had been for a time still, the Prophet says now, that he will not always conceal himself, but that he will undertake the defense of his people, and be like a lion; for he will rise up in dreadful violence against all his enemies.

And tremble, he says, *shall the heaven and the earth*. As almost the whole world was opposed to his elect people, the Prophet carefully dwells on this point, that nothing might hinder the faithful from looking for the redemption promised to them: "Though the heaven and the earth," he says, "raise oppositions God will yet prevail by his wonderful power. *Tremble*, he says, shall all the elements; what, then, will men do? Though they muster all their forces, and try all means, can they close up the way against the Lord, that he may not deliver his people?" We now understand the Prophet's design in speaking of the shaking of heaven and earth.

He at last adds, *God will be a hope to his people, and strength to the children of Israel.* In this part he gives a sufficient proof of what I have stated, — that he denounces extreme vengeance on the nations for the sake of his Church; for the Lord will at length pity his people, though they may seem to have perished before he succors them. However past hope then the people may be in their own estimation and in that of all others, yet God will again raise up the expectation of all the godly, who shall remain, and will inspire them with new courage. He speaks in general of the children of Israel; but what he says belongs only to the remnant, of which the Prophet had lately spoken; for not all, we know, who derive their origin from the fathers according to the flesh, were true Israelites. The Prophet refers here to the true Church; and hence Israel ought to be taken for the genuine and legitimate children of Abraham; as Christ, in the person of Nathanael, calls those true Israelites who imitated the faith of their father Abraham. I shall to-day finish this Prophet; I do not therefore dwell much on every sentence. It now follows —

<290317> JOEL 3:17	
17. So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more.	17. Et cognoscetis quod ego sim Jehova Deus vester, habitans in Sion, monte sanctitatis meae: et erit Jerusalem sanctitas, et alieni non transibunt per eam amplius.

This is a confirmation of the preceding doctrine, *ye shall know*, he says, that I am *your God*. The Prophet intimates that the favor of God had been so hidden during the afflictions of the people, that they could not but think that they were forsaken by God. His word ought indeed to be sufficient for us in the greatest evils; for though God may cast us into the deepest gulfs, yet when he shines upon us by his word, it ought to be a consolation abundantly available to sustain our souls. But yet, unless God really appears, we are confounded, and ask where is his power. For this reason the Prophet now says, that the faithful *shall* at length *know*, that is, really know him as their God.

There is a twofold knowledge, — the knowledge of faith, received from his word, — and the knowledge of experience, as we say, derived from actual

enjoyment. The faithful ever acknowledge that salvation is laid up for them in God; but sometimes they stagger and suffer grievous torments in their minds, and are tossed here and there. However it may be with them, they certainly do not by actual enjoyment know God to be their Father. The Prophet therefore now treats of real knowledge, when he says, that they shall know that they have a God, — how are they to know this? By experience. Now this passage teaches us, that though God should not put forth his hand manifestly to help us, we ought yet to entertain good hope of his favor; for the Prophet spoke for this end, — that the godly might, before the event or the accomplishment of the prophecy should come, look to God and cast on him all their cares. Then the faithful, before they had real knowledge, knew God to be their Father, and hence hesitated not to flee to him though what the Prophet testified had not yet been visibly accomplished.

Dwelling in Zion, the mountain of my holiness: This has been designedly added, that the faithful might know, that God made not a covenant in vain with Abraham, that mount Zion had not in vain been chosen, that they might there call on God; for we must have our attention called to the promises, otherwise all doctrine will become frigid. Now we know that all the promises have been founded on a covenant, that is, because God had adopted the people, and afterwards deposited his covenant in the hand of David, and then he designated mount Zion as his sanctuary. Since, then, all the promises flow from this fountain, it was necessary to call the attention of the Jews to the covenant: and this is the reason why the Prophet says now that God dwells in Zion; for otherwise this doctrine would no doubt only lead to superstition. God, indeed, we know, cannot be included within the circumference of any place, much less could he be confined to the narrow limits of the temple; but he dwelt on mount Zion on account of his own law, because he made a covenant with Abraham, and afterwards with David.

It then follows, *And Jerusalem shall be holy,, and aliens shall not pass through it any more.* While he declares that Jerusalem shall be holy, he exempts it at the same time from profanation. We know that it is a common mode of speaking in Scripture, and what often occurs, that God's heritage is holy, and also, that they profaned it. Hence, when the people were exposed as a prey to the pleasure of their enemies, the heritage of God became forsaken and polluted, profane men trod Jerusalem as it were

under foot. But now the Prophet exempts the holy city from this pollution, as though he said, “The Lord will not allow his people to be thus miserably harassed, and will show that this city has been chosen by him, and that he has in it his dwelling. Aliens then shall no more pass through it — Why? For it is first the holy city of God, and then, of his Church.

But as this promise extends to the whole kingdom of Christ, God doubtless makes here a general promise, that he will be the protector of his Church, that it may not be subject to the will of enemies; and yet we see that it often happens otherwise. But this ought to be imputed to our sins, for we make the breaches. God would, indeed be a wall and a rampart to us, as it is said elsewhere, (<232601> Isaiah 26:1;) but we betray his Church by our sins. Hence aliens occupy a place in it: Ye we see at this day; for Antichrist, as it has been foretold, has now for ages exercised dominion in God’s sanctuary. Since it is so, we ought to mourn at seeing God’s holy Church profaned. Let us yet know, that God will take care to gather his elect, and to cleanse them from every pollution and defilement. It follows

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<290318> JOEL 3:18-19	
18. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim.	18. Et erit in die illa, stillabunt montes mustum, et colles decurrere facient lac; et omnes rivi Jehudah emittent aquas (hoc est, descendere facient,) et fons e domo Jehovah egredietur et irrigabit vallem Sittim.
19. Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence against the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land.	19. Aegyptus in solitudinem erit, et Edom in desertum solitudinis erit, propter vexationem filiorum Jehudah; quia fuderunt sanguinem innoxium (vel, purum) in terra sua (vel, ipsorum.)

The Prophet here declares that God will be so bountiful to his people, that no good things will be wanting to them either in abundance or variety. When God then shall restore his Church, it will abound, he says, in every kind of blessing: for this is the meaning of this language, *Distill new wine shall the mountains, and the hills shall make milk to run down; and all rivers also shall have abundant waters, and a fountain shall arise from the house of Judah to irrigate the valley of Shittim*. We now perceive the design of Joel. But we must remember that when the Prophets so splendidly extol the blessings of God, they intend not to fill the minds of the godly with thoughts about eating and drinking; but profane men lay hold on such passages as though the Lord intended to gratify their appetite. We know, indeed, that God's children differ much from swine: hence God fills not the faithful with earthly things, for this would not be useful for their salvation. At the same time, he thus enlarges on his blessings, that we may know that no happiness shall in any way be wanting to us, when God shall be propitious to us. We hence see that our Prophet so speaks of God's earthly blessings, that he fills not the minds of the godly with these things but desires to raise them above, as though he said, that the Israelites would in every way be happy, after having in the first place been reconciled to God. For whence came their miseries and distresses of every kind, but from their sins? Since, then, all troubles, all evils, are signs of God's wrath and alienation, it is no wonder that the Lord, when he declares that he will be propitious to them, adds also the proofs of his paternal love, as he does here: and we know that it was necessary for that rude people, while under the elements of the Law, to be thus instructed; for they could not as yet take solid food, as we know that the ancients under the Law were like children. But it is enough for us to understand the design of the Holy Spirit, namely, that God will satisfy his people with the abundance of all good things, as far as it will be for their benefit. Since God now calls us directly to heaven, and raises our minds to the spiritual life, what Paul says ought to be sufficient, — that to godliness is given the hope, not only of future life, but also of that which is present, (1 Timothy 4;) for God will bless us on the earth, but it will be, as we have already observed, according to the measure of our infirmity.

The *valley of Shittim* was nigh the borders of the Moabites, as we learn from ^{<042501>}Numbers 25:1, and ^{<060201>}Joshua 2:1. Now when the Prophet says, that waters, flowing from the holy fountains would irrigate the valley

of Shittim, it is the same as though he said, that the blessing of God in Judea would be so abundant, as to diffuse itself far and wide, even to desert valleys.

But he afterwards joins, that the Egyptians and Idumeans would be sterile and dry in the midst of this great abundance of blessings, for they were professed enemies to the Church. Hence God in this verse declares that they shall not be partakers of his bounty; that though all Judea would be irrigated, though it would abound in honeys milk, and wine, yet these would remain barren and empty; *Mizraim*, then, *shall be a solitude, Edom shall be a desert of solitude*. Why? *Because of the troubles, he says, brought on the children of Judah*. God again confirms this truth, that he has such a concern for his Church, that he will avenge wrongs done to it. God, then, does not always come to our help when we are unjustly oppressed, though he has taken us under his protection; but he suffers us for a time to endure our evils; and yet the end will show, that we have been ever dear to him and precious in his sight. So he says now, that for the *harassments* which the Egyptians and Idumeans occasioned to the children of Judah, they shall be destitute, notwithstanding the abundance of all good things.

Because they shed, he says, innocent blood in their (or, in their own) land. If we refer this to Egypt and Idumea, the sense will be, that they had not protected fugitives, but, on the contrary, cruelly slew them, as though they had been sworn enemies. Many, we know, during times of distress, fled to Egypt and Idumea, to seek refuge there. As, then, the Egyptians had been so inhuman towards the distressed, the Prophet threatens them with vengeance. But I prefer to view what is said as having been done in Judea; *they have then shed innocent Blood*, that is, in Judea itself. As God had consecrated this land to himself to pollute it with unjust slaughters was a more atrocious crime. Forasmuch then as the Egyptians and Idumeans thus treated the Jews, and slew them in their own country in a base manner, though they were abiding quietly at home, it is no wonder that God declares, that he would be the avenger of these wrongs. It follows —

<290320> JOEL 3:20

20. But Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation.

20. Et Jehudah in aeternum habitabit (alii passive accipiunt, habitabitur) et Jerusalem erit in generationem et generationem.

God here testifies that his redemption would not be for a short time, but that its fruit would be for a long, period, yea, perpetual: for it would be but a small thing for the Church to be redeemed, except God kept it safe under his own power. This second thing the Prophet now adds, — that *Judah shall always remain* safe, and that *Jerusalem shall be* for a continued succession of ages. The ungodly, we know, sometimes flourish for a time, though before God they are already doomed to destruction. But the Prophet here declares, that the fruit of the redemption he promises will be eternal: for God is not led to deliver his Church only for a moment, but he will follow it with perpetual favor, and remain constant in his purpose and ever like himself; he is therefore the eternal and faithful protector of his people. The last verse follows —

<290321> JOEL 3:21

21. For I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed: for the LORD dwelleth in Zion.

21. Et mundabo sanguinem eorum, non mundavi: et Jehova habitans in Sion.

The beginning of the verse is in various ways explained. Some make a stop after *cleanse* thus, “I will cleanse, yet their blood I will not cleanse;” as though God had said, that he would forgive heathen nations all their other wrongs, but could not forgive them the great cruelty they had exercised against his elect. So the sense would be, “Avarice may be borne, I could pass by robberies; but, since they slew my people, I am in this case wholly unforgiving.” Hence, according to this view, God shows how precious to him is the life of his saints, inasmuch as he says, that he will not be pacified towards those ungodly men who have shed innocent blood. But this sense seems rather too forced. Others render thus, “Their blood will I cleanse, and will not cleanse,” that is, “I will cleanse the Jews from

their defilements, but I will not use extreme severity;” as he says also in Isaiah 48, ‘I will not refine thee as gold or silver, for thou wouldest turn all into dross.’ They hence think that God promises here such a cleansing of the Church, as that he would not use extreme rigor, but moderate his cleansing, as it is needful with regard to our defilements, of which we are all so full.

But this sense seems to me more simple, — that God would cleanse the blood which he had not cleansed; as though he said, “I have not hitherto cleansed the pollutions of my people; they are then become, as it were, putrid in their sins; but now I will begin to purify all their wickedness, that they may shine pure before me.” There is a relative understood as is often the case in Hebrew. But נקה *neke* is taken in ^{<243001>}Jeremiah 30:1, in another sense, that God will exterminate his Church: but we cannot in this place elicit any other meaning than that God will cleanse his Church from pollutions; for the Prophet, no doubt, means the defilements of which the people were full. They will not, then, be able to enjoy the favor of God while lying in their filth. Now God, in promising to be a Redeemer, comes to the very fountain and the first thing, — that he will wash away their filth; for how could God be the Redeemer of the people, except he blotted out their sins? For as long as he imputes sins to us, he must necessarily be angry with us, we must be necessarily altogether alienated from him and deprived of his blessing. He then does not say in vain that he will be a purifier; for when pollutions are cleansed, there follows another thing, which we have already noticed as to this, future redemption, and with this

He at last concludes and says *And Jehovah shall dwell in Zion*. The Prophet recalls again the attention of the people to the covenant; as though he said, “God has willingly and bountifully promised all that has been mentioned, not because the people have deserved this, but because God has deigned long ago to adopt the children of Abraham, and has chosen mount Zion as his habitation.” He shows then this to be the reason why God was now inclined to mercy, and would save a people, who had a hundred times destroyed themselves by their sins.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we have, in this world, to fight continually, not only with one kind of enemies, but with numberless enemies, and not only with flesh and blood, but also with the devil, the prince of darkness, — O grant, that, being armed with thy power, we may persevere in this contest; and when thou afflictest us for our sins, may we learn to humble ourselves, and so submit to thy authority, that we may hope for the redemption promised to us; and though tokens of thy displeasure may often appear to us, may we yet ever raise up our minds by hope to heaven, and from thence look for thy only begotten Son, until, coming as the Judge of the world, he gathers us and brings us to the fruition of that blessed and eternal life, which he has obtained for us by his own blood. Amen.

END OF THE COMMENTARIES ON JOEL.

A TRANSLATION OF

CALVIN'S VERSION OF

THE PROPHECIES OF JOEL.

CHAPTER 1

- 1 The word of Jehovah which came to Joel, the son of Pethuel.
- 2 Hear this, ye the aged; And give ear, al ye inhabitants of the land; Hath this been in your days, Or in the days of your fathers?
- 3 This to your children declare, And your children to their children, And their children to the next generation,—
- 4 “The residue of the locust hath the chafer eaten, “The residue of the chafer hath the cankerworm eaten, “The residue of the cankerworm hath the caterpillar eaten.”
- 5 Awake ye drunkards, and weep; Howl ye all who drink wine for the new wine; For cut off it is from your mouth.
- 6 Verily a nation came up over my land, Strong and without number: Its teeth the teeth the teeth of a lion, And its jaw-bones *those* of a young lion:
- 7 It exposed my vine to desolation, And my fig-tree to the stripping of the bark; By denuding it denuded it and cast it away, White have been made its branches.—
- 8 Lament as a young woman, girded with sackcloth, For the husband of her youth.
- 9 Cut off is offering and libation From the house of Jehovah; Mourn do the priests, the ministers of Jehovah;

- 10** Wasted is the field, mourn does the land; For laid waste is the corn, Dried up is the wine, destroyed is the oil.
- 11** Be ashamed, ye husbandmen, howl, ye vinedressers, On account of the wheat and the barley; For perished has the harvest of the field,
- 12** The vine is dried up, and the fig-tree is destroyed; The pomegranate, the palm also and the apple tree,— All the trees of the field have dried up: Verily dried up is joy among the children of men!
- 13** Be girded and lament, ye priests; Howl ye ministers of the altar; Come, spend the night in sackcloth, Ye ministers of my God; For withheld from the house of your God Is offering and a libation:
- 14** Sanctify a fast, call an assembly, Gather the elders, all the inhabitants of the land, Into the house of Jehovah your God, And cry ye to Jehovah.—
- 15** Alas the day! For nigh is the day of Jehovah, And as a desolation from the Almighty it will come.
- 16** Has not the meat before your eyes been cut off, Joy and gladness from the house of our God?
- 17** Rotted have the grains under the clods, Desolate are the granaries, Pulled down have been the barns, For dried up has the corn.
- 18** How has the beast groaned! Confounded are the herds of oxen! For wanting to them are pastures; The flocks of sheep are also desolate.
- 19** To thee Jehovah will I cry; For the fire hath consumed the pastures of the desert, And the flame hath burnt all the trees of the field:
- 20** The beasts of the field will also cry to thee; For dried up have the streams of waters, For the fire hath consumed the pastures of the desert.

CHAPTER 2

- 1 Sound ye the trumpet in Zion, And cry aloud on my holy mountain: Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; For coming is the day of Jehovah, for nigh it is,—
- 2 A day of darkness and thick darkness, A day of cloudiness and of obscurity, Like the dawn expanding over the mountains,— A people, great and strong, The like of them has not been from the beginning, Nor after them shall be for many generations;
- 3 Before them, a devouring fire, And after them, a flame, shall burn; Like the garden of Eden the land before them, And after them, a desert of solitude; And so there will be no escape from them:
- 4 As the appearance of horses, their appearance, And as horsemen they will run;
- 5 As the sound of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, As the sound of the flame of fire devouring the stubble, As a strong people prepared for battle;
- 6 Their face will the people dread, All faces will gather blackness;
- 7 As giants will they run here and there, As men of war will they ascend the wall, And each in his ways will proceed, And they shall not stay their goings;
- 8 No one will thrust his brother, Every one in his way will march on; On the sword shall they fall, and shall not be wounded;
- 9 Though the city shall they go, over the wall shall they run, Into houses shall they climb, Into the windows shall they enter like a thief:
- 10 Before them shall tremble the earth, And in anguish shall be the heavens, The sun and moon shall be darkened, And the stars shall withdraw their brightness;

- 11** And Jehovah will utter his voice before his army, For very great will be his camp. For strong is he who doeth his word; For great will be the day of Jehovah, And very terrible, and who will endure it?
- 12** But even now, saith Jehovah, Turn to me with your whole heart, And with fasting, and weeping, and mourning;
- 13** And rend your heart, and not your garments, And turn to Jehovah your God; For he is propitious and merciful, Slow to wrath, and abundant in goodness, And will repent of the evil:
- 14** Who knows, whether he will return and repent, And leave behind him a blessing— An offering and a libation to Jehovah your God?
- 15** Sound ye the trumpet in Zion, Sanctify a fast, proclaim a meeting,
- 16** Gather the people, sanctify the assembly, Bring together the aged, gather the children And those suckling the breasts; And let the bridegroom come forth from his recess, And the bride from her chamber;
- 17** Between the porch and the altar let the priests, The ministers of Jehovah, weep and say,— “Be propitious, Jehovah, to thy people, “And give not thy heritage to reproach, “That the nations should rule over them; “Why should they say among the people, ““Where is their God?””
- 18** Then jealous will Jehovah be for his land, And he will be propitious to his people;
- 19** And Jehovah will answer, and say to his people:^{f16} “Behold, I will send to you corn, and wine, and oil, “And ye shall be satisfied with them; “And I will make you no more a reproach among the nations;

- 20** “And the Northlander will I remove far from you, “And drive him to a desert and dry land, “*With* his face to the eastern sea, “And his rear to the hindmost sea; “And ascend shall his ill savor, “And ascend shall his rottenness; “For high hath he exalted himself to do *his purpose*.”
- 21** Fear not, thou land; exult and rejoice; For Jehovah hath high exalted himself to do *his purpose*:
- 22** Fear not, ye beasts of the fields; For grow shall the pastures of the desert, For the tree shall bring forth its fruit, The fig-tree and the vine shall yield their substance:
- 23** And ye children of Zion, exult, And rejoice in Jehovah your God; For he will give you rain in due measure, And make to come down for you the showering rain, And the rain in the first month;
- 24** And filled shall the floors be with corn, And overflow shall the vats with wine and oil;
- 25** And I will restore years to you *For those* which the locust hath eaten, The chafer, and the caterpillar,— My great army, which I sent to you:
- 26** And eating, ye shall eat and satisfy yourselves, And shall praise the name of Jehovah your God, Because he hath dealt wondrously with you; And ashamed shall not my people be for ever.
- 27** And ye shall know that in the midst of Israel I am, And that I Jehovah am your God, and none else; And ashamed shall not my people be forever.
- 28** And shall it be afterwards, That I will pour my Spirit on all flesh, And prophesy shall your sons and your daughters, And your old men shall dreams dream, And your young men shall visions see;
- 29** And also on servants and maid-servants Will I in those days pour my spirit:

- 30** And I will set prodigies in heaven and on earth,— Blood and fire, and columns of mist;
- 31** The sun shall be turned into darkness, The moon into blood, Before it comes—the day of Jehovah, great and terrible:
- 32** Then it shall be, that whosoever shall call On the name of Jehovah, shall be delivered; For in mount Zion and in Jerusalem Shall be deliverance, as Jehovah hath promised, And for the residue whom Jehovah shall call.

CHAPTER 3

- 1** For, behold in those days, and at that time, When I shall restore the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will then gather all the nations, and bring them down to the valley of Jehosaphat; And I will there contend with them, For my people and for my heritage Israel; Because they have scattered them among the nations,
- 2** And divided my land, and on my people cast lots, And have given a boy for a harlot, And have sold a girl for wine, that they may drink.
- 3** And yet, what have ye to do with me, O Tyre and Sidon, and all the borders of Palestine? Will ye recompense return to me?
- 4** Now if ye repay me with this, Quickly—suddenly will I return Your recompense on your own head.
- 5** Because ye have taken away my silver and my gold, And my desirable things have removed to your temples,
- 6** And have sold the children of Judah and the children of Jerusalem To the children of the Grecians, That ye might drive them far from their own borders;—
- 7** Behold, I will raise them from the place to which ye have sold them, And will return your recompense on your head;

- 8** For I will sell your sons and your daughters to the children of Judah, And they shall sell them to the Sabeans, a distant nation; For *thus* hath Jehovah spoken.
- 9** Publish this among the nations, Proclaim a war, rouse the strong, Let them come, let them ascend, all the men of war:
- 10** Beat your plowshares into swords, And your pruning-hooks into spears; Let the weak say, "I am strong."
- 11** Assemble and come all ye nations, Assemble all around; There will Jehovah lay prostrate all thy valiant ones.
- 12** Awake let the nations, and ascend to the valley of Jehosaphat; For there will I sit to judge all the nations around.
- 13** Put forth the sickle, for ripened has the harvest; Come, go down, for full is the wine-press, Overflowing are the vats, For multiplied has their wickedness.
- 14** Nations! Nations! In the valley of the sledge; For nigh is Jehovah's day in the valley of the sledge: The sun and the moon shall be darkened, And the stars shall withdraw their brightness;
- 15** And Jehovah from Zion shall roar, And from Jerusalem shall utter his voice, And tremble shall the heavens and the earth;
- 16** But Jehovah will be a hope to his people, And a strength to the children of Israel:
- 17** Then ye shall know that I Jehovah am your God, Dwelling in Zion, the mount of my holiness; And Jerusalem shall be holiness, And aliens shall pass through it no more.
- 18** And it shall be in that day, That distill new wine shall the mountains, And the hills shall cause milk to run down, And all the rivers of Judah shall send forth waters; A fountain also from the house of Jehovah shall go forth, And it shall water the valley of Shittim.
- 19** Egypt shall be a solitude, And Edom shall be a desert of solitude, For the outrage done to the children of Judah, Because they shed innocent blood in their own land:

But Judah shall forever safely dwell, And Jerusalem shall be
from age to age; And I will cleanse their blood *which* I have not
cleansed, And Jehovah *shall* dwell in Zion.

ADDENDA TO JOEL

<290104> **JOEL 1:4**, *The residue of the locusts*, etc. “A comparison,” says Dr. Henderson, “of the different passages in which these names occur, renders it more than probable that they are here employed by the Prophet, not with any reference to the species into which the locusts may be scientifically divided, but to designate four successive swarms, according to certain destructive qualities, by which, as a genus of insects, they are distinguished, and thereby to heighten the terror which this description was intended to produce.”

Mercerius, as quoted in *Poli Syn.*, tells us, that almost all divines, both ancient and modern, understood this narrative of the locusts allegorically; and it appears that, according to some, they designate the four incursions of the Chaldeans into the land, that is, by Tiglathpileser, Shalmanezzer, Sennacherib, and Nebuchadnezzar; or, according to Cyril, by Shalmanezzer, Nebuchadnezzar, Antiochus, and the Romans; or, according to Jerome, the four empires which successively ruled over the Jews, the first locust representing the Chaldeans, — the second, the Medes and Persians, — the third, the Macedonians, — and the fourth, the Romans. But these are hallucinations and not expositions. Much more appropriate is the opinion stated and approved by *Henderson*, that in this chapter Joel describes a devastation of the country by natural locusts; and that in the second he predicts a devastation by the Assyrians in a language highly metaphorical, borrowed in some measure from the scene described here; and this is exactly the view of *Calvin*.

<290212> **JOEL 2:12**, *But even now*, etc. Our version, “Therefor also now,” is not so emphatical as that of *Calvin*. The full meaning has been perceived by *Newcome*, “Yet even now,” though omitted by *Henderson*, whose rendering is, “Now therefore,” which comes short of our common version.

<290213> **JOEL 2:13**, *For he is propitious*, etc. It is of great importance that this declaration of what God is should be correctly rendered. *Newcome*’s version is the same with our common translation. *Henderson*’s is different; it is this, —

*“For he is pitiful and compassionate,
Long-suffering and of great mercy,
And repenteth of the evil.”*

The first, **חַנּוּן**, is not “pitiful,” but gracious, benevolent, propitious, gratuitously kind, favorable to the undeserving; it comes from **חָן**, to show favor or kindness; and the last letter being doubled, it may be rendered, very kind, or very gracious. The second is **רַחוּם**, which more properly means pitiful, but rightly rendered, “compassionate,” rather than “merciful,” as in our version. The third, **אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם**, is better expressed by “slow to anger,” or to wrath, than by “long-suffering.” The fourth is, **רַב-חֶסֶד**, much, or abundant in goodness: the word **חֶסֶד** is sometimes rendered mercy, but not properly; it means overflowing goodness, or exuberant benevolence. *Adam Clarke* has given an accurate description of these terms: — “*gracious* — good and benevolent in his own nature, — *merciful* — pitying and forgiving, — *slow to anger* — not easily provoked to punish, — *of great kindness* — exuberant goodness to all them who return to him.”

<290214> **JOEL 2:14**, *who knows*, etc. *Henderson* has been very felicitous in his version of this line, —

“Who knoweth? He may turn and repent.”

It is an instance of the potential or subjunctive meaning of the future tense in Hebrew; which is the case probably much oftener than what is generally thought. But not so felicitous is the rendering of **חֲסוּסָה**, in verse 17, by “Have pity.” The meaning of the verb is, no doubt to spare, as it is rendered, I believe, uniformly in our version. It may be seen in connection with two other verbs, which include the ideas of pity and sympathy, in <241314> **Jeremiah 13:14; 21:7**.

<290220> **JOEL 2:20**, *For high hath he exalted himself to his purpose*. Both *Newcome* and *Henderson* retain the common version, only the former reads, “Though,” instead of “because he hath done great things.” **לַעֲשׂוֹת כִּי הִגְדִּיל**, “For he made himself great in (or, by) doing,” or, “Became great in doing.” It is the greatness of the doer that is set forth, rather than of the things done. *Henderson* very justly observes, that those words “convey the idea of moral agency, and can with no propriety be

interpreted of the locusts.” Exactly the same words are adopted in the next verse in reference to God.

<290225> **JOEL 2:25**, *My great army*, etc. *Newcome* says, “We have here a key to the grand and beautiful description which runs through these two chapters.” He considered that the Prophet is to be understood throughout “as foretelling a plague of locusts.” But this can be no key to such an interpretation, for what is said in this verse coalesces much better with the other view. On the supposition that there *had* been locusts, as related in the first chapter, and that the Prophet threatens a heavier judgment in this, which could only be prevented by repentance, to which he exhorts them, it appears most appropriate for him to say, that not only “the Northlander,” of whose invasion he had spoken, would be driven away and destroyed, but that also the devastations already produced by the locusts would be repaired. So far then is this verse from being a key to the proposed interpretation, that it is much more suitable to the other.

<290230> **JOEL 2:30**, *And I will set prodigies*, etc. *Calvin* extends the range of these prodigies beyond what most commentators do. They are viewed by most as those prodigies, recorded even by the historian *Josephus*, which preceded the overthrow of the city and the temple by the Romans, when the whole kingdom, in a civil and ecclesiastical sense, was completely abolished. *The day of the Lord*, as mentioned here, has therefore been regarded as the day or time when this awful calamity happened to the Jews: but *Calvin* regards it as the day of final judgment. There is no doubt much truth in what he says about prodigies or awful judgments ever accompanying the gospel, not as its effects, but as visitations for unbelief, and willful and malicious opposition to it. There is much in the history of the world in confirmation of what he advances. The determinate suppression of the gospel by those who had opportunity of knowing it, or the evident depravation of it either by the influence of infidelity or of superstition, have often been visited in this world with awful judgments, such as wars and political disturbances.

FOOTNOTES

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

Ft1 —Pastoreum nostrum **μηδεν ὑστερηκεναι των ὑπερ λιαν προφητων** ; ut sensuum elatione et magnificentia spiritus prope summis parem, ita etiam dictionis splendore et composititonis elegancia vix ququam inferioreum.—*Lowth, Prael. xxi.*

CHAPTER 1

Ft2 All these are different kinds of locusts. There are in Hebrew *ten* names for them, designative probably of so many kinds. There are four here: **גִּזָּם** , *gizam*, the young locust; **אַרְבֵּה** , *arebe*, so called from their number, one on the wing; **יִלָּק** , *ilak*, one of the hairy bristly kind; and **אֶשֶׁל** , *chesil*, one unfledged. Following the probable ideal meaning of the words, we may give them these names, —the *cutter*, the *multiplier*, the *licker*, and the *devourer*.—*Ed.*

Ft3 But most commentators consider these two verses as containing a more particular description of the devastations produced by the locusts mentioned before. That they are called “a nation” is according to prophetic style, and what has been done by heathen poets: the wasting of the vine and the barking of the fig-tree seem more suitable to this view. It is true that **גוֹי** , nation, and not **עַם** people, as in **<203025>** Proverbs 30:25, is here used; but, as Dr. Henderson observes, it seems to have been selected on purpose “to prepare the minds of the Jews for the allegorical use made of these insects in chapter 2.”—*Ed.*

Ft4 Of the three foregoing trees we may add this account:
The pomegranate, **רִמּוֹן** , grows about 20 feet high, has a straight stem and spreading branches, and bears large red blossoms. Its fruit is about the size of an orange, and is delicious and cooling.
The palm or date-tree, **תַּמָּר** , is sometimes as high as 100 feet, and remarkably straight. Its fruit grows in clusters under its leaves, and is

in taste very sweet. Palm branches were emblems of victory. What is called here the apple-tree, תפוח , was no doubt the citron-tree. The word is derived from נפה , to breathe, on account of the extreme fragrance it emits.—*Ed.*

CHAPTER 2

^{Ft5} Medium opus, “a middle work, neutral, neither good nor bad”.—*Ed.*

^{Ft6} That is, restraint. Literally it is, *Proclaim a restraint*. And as it means a restraint generally from labor as well as from food, it is applied to designate a feast-day, when men are detained or restrained from labor.—*Ed.*

^{Ft7} Dr. Henderson, in his learned work on the Minor Prophets, lately published, agrees with Calvin in rejecting the interpretation alluded to here, though adopted by many learned men. He considers that the Assyrians, and not locusts, are described in the beginning of this chapter and that the Prophet “employs language borrowed from the appearance and movements of these insects, in order to make a deeper impression upon his hearers, whose minds were full of ideas derived from them as instruments of the calamity under which they were suffering.” The locusts in the first chapter are spoken of as having already appeared; but the judgment detailed in this chapter is represented as future.—*Ed.*

^{Ft8} There is no reason for rendering this in the past tense: it is in the same predicament with the verb, “will be jealous,” in the former verse, and ought to be rendered like it in the future time, “will answer.” The comment founded on this rendering, though true in itself, is yet too refined, and suits not this place.—*Ed.*

^{Ft9} Dr. Henderson agrees with Calvin in rendering this word, *Northern* or *Highlander*, and quotes Coverdale as rendering it, *Him of the North*. He considers this word as of “prime importance in the interpretation of this prophecy.” Locusts visited Palestine not from the north, but from the south. “That, however,” he adds, “which determines the question, is the addition of the patronymic ' to צפון , indicating that the North was not merely the quarter whence the subject of the discourse came,

but that its *native country* lay to the North of Palestine; just as **הַתִּמְנִי** , the *Temanite*, means *the Southern*, etc.—*Ed.*

Ft10 Literally, “Into a land dry and desolate.”—*Ed.*

Ft11 There are four sorts mentioned in Hebrew as in the first chapter: one of them is omitted here and in the Latin text.—*Ed.*

Ft12 However true in itself is what is here advanced, yet the exposition seems rather too refined, and what the passage does not require. The difficulty stated will vanish, when we consider that “all flesh” is a general expression, afterwards particularized and limited: and “and all flesh,” according to what is subsequently specified, evidently means all conditions of men, men in all states and of every age, and not the whole of mankind. “And also,” in verse 29, is very emphatical, as the persons afterwards mentioned were of the lowest grade, “servants and handmaids,” that is, slaves: and such were many of the first converts to Christianity. See ^{<480328>}Galatians 3:28; ^{<510311>}Colossians 3:11. Though the word for ‘servants’ does not necessarily mean those in a servile condition, yet it has that meaning. The same is true of the word for handmaids. Hagar, expressly called a bondwoman by Paul, is called by this name, ^{<011601>}Genesis 16:1. And to view the words as signifying slaves, would make the prophecy more striking, as being literally fulfilled at the first promulgation of the Gospel.

CHAPTER 3

Ft12 “To this valley or glen, in which is the celebrated burying-place of the Jews, the Rabbins have appropriated the name, (the valley of Jehosaphat,) and maintain, that in it the final judgment of the world is to be held;—a conceit in which they have been followed by many Christian writers, as well as by the Mohammedans.”—*Dr. Henderson.*

Ft14 **לְבָנֵי הַיּוֹנִים** , to the children of the Ivanites, or Javanites.—*Ed.*

Ft15 “This prophecy was fulfilled before and during the rule of the Maccabees, when the Jewish affairs were in so flourishing a state, and the Phoenician and Philistine powers were reduced by the Persian arms under Artaxerxes Mnemon, Darius Ochus, and especially Alexander and his successors. On the capture of Tyre by the Grecian monarch, 13,000 of the inhabitants were sold into slavery. When he took Gaza

also, he put 10,000 of the citizens to death and sold the rest, with the women and children, for slaves.”—*Dr. Henderson*.

FOOTNOTE FOR THE TRANSLATION OF JOEL

^{Ft16} This line is rendered to the version of Calvin, and not according to his comment. See p. 75.