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A

# COMMENTARY

ON THE

# HOLY SCRIPTURES:

CRITICAL, DOCTRINAL, AND HOMILETICAL.

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MINISTERS AND STUDENTS

BY

JOHN PETER LANGE, D. D.,

ORDINARY PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BONN,

IN CONNECTION WITH A NUMBER OF EMINENT EUROPEAN DIVINES

*TRANSLATED, ENLARGED, AND EDITED*

BY

PHILIP SCHAFF, D. D.,

PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY IN THE UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY. NEW YORK,

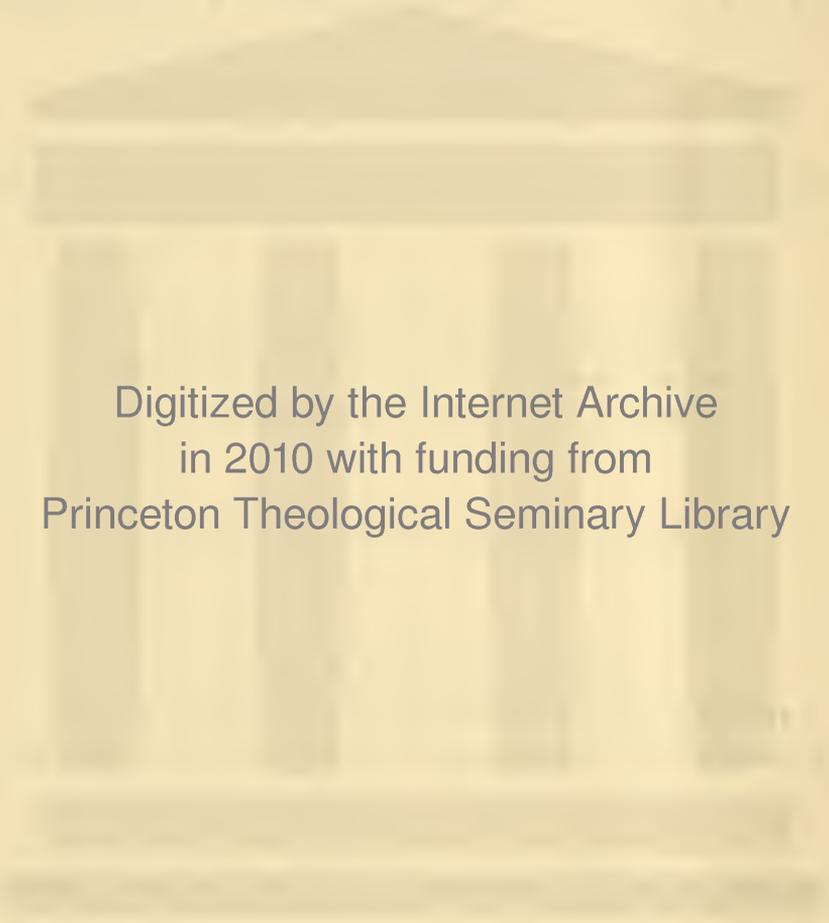
IN CONNECTION WITH AMERICAN SCHOLARS OF VARIOUS EVANGELICAL DENOMINATIONS.

VOLUME XIV. OF THE OLD TESTAMENT: CONTAINING THE MINOR PROPHETS<sup>1</sup>

NEW YORK:

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS,

1899



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THE

# MINOR PROPHETS.

**EXEGETICALLY, THEOLOGICALLY. AND HOMILETICALLY**

**EXPOUNDED**

BY

PAUL KLEINERT, OTTO SCHMOLLER,  
GEORGE R. BLISS, TALBOT W. CHAMBERS, CHARLES ELLICOTT,  
JOHN FORSYTH, J. FREDERICK McCURDY, AND  
JOSEPH PACKARD.

EDITED BY

PHILIP SCHAFF, D. D.

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## PREFACE BY THE GENERAL EDITOR.

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THE volume on the MINOR PROPHETS is partly in advance of the German original, which has not yet reached the three post-exilian Prophets. The commentaries on the nine earlier Prophets by Professors KLEINERT and SCHMOLLER appeared in separate numbers some time ago<sup>1</sup>; but for Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, Dr. Lange has not, to this date, been able to secure a suitable co-laborer.<sup>2</sup> With his cordial approval I deem it better to complete the volume by original commentaries than indefinitely to postpone the publication. They were prepared by sound and able scholars, in conformity with the plan of the whole work.

The volume accordingly contains the following parts, each one being paged separately:—

1. A GENERAL INTRODUCTION to the PROPHETS, especially the MINOR PROPHETS, by Rev. CHARLES ELLIOTT, D. D., Professor of Biblical Exegesis in Chicago, Illinois. The general introductions of Kleinert and Schmoller are too brief and incomplete for our purpose, and therefore I requested Dr. ELLIOTT to prepare an independent essay on the subject.

2. HOSEA. By Rev. Dr. OTTO SCHMOLLER. Translated from the German and enlarged by JAMES FREDERICK MCCURDY, M. A., of Princeton, N. J.

3. JOEL. By OTTO SCHMOLLER. Translated and enlarged by Rev. JOHN FORSYTH, D. D., LL. D., Chaplain and Professor of Ethics and Law in the United States Military Academy, West Point, N. Y.

4. AMOS. By OTTO SCHMOLLER. Translated and enlarged by Rev. TALBOT W CHAMBERS, D. D., Pastor of the Collegiate Reformed Dutch Church, New York.

5. OBADIAH. By Rev. PAUL KLEINERT, Professor of Old Testament Theology in the University of Berlin. Translated and enlarged by Rev. GEORGE R. BLISS, D. D., Professor in the University of Lewisburg, Pennsylvania.

6. JONAH. By Prof. PAUL KLEINERT, of the University of Berlin. Translated and enlarged by Rev. CHARLES ELLIOTT, Professor of Biblical Exegesis in Chicago.<sup>3</sup>

7. MICAH. By Prof. PAUL KLEINERT, of Berlin, and Prof. GEORGE R. BLISS, of Lewisburg.

8. NAHUM. By Prof. PAUL KLEINERT, of Berlin, and Prof. CHARLES ELLIOTT, of Chicago.

9. HABAKKUK. By Professors KLEINERT and ELLIOTT.

<sup>1</sup> *Obadiah, Jonah, Micha, Nahum, Habakuk, Zephanjah. Wissenschaftlich und für den Gebrauch der Kirche ausgelegt von PAUL KLEINERT, Pfarrer zu St. Gertraud und a. Professor an der Universität zu Berlin. Bielefeld u. Leipzig, 1868. — Die Propheten Hosea, Joel und Amos. Theologisch-homiletisch bearbeitet von OTTO SCHMOLLER, Licent. der Theologie, Diaconus in Urach. Bielef. und Leipzig, 1872.*

<sup>2</sup> The commentary of Rev. W. PRESSEL on these three Prophets (*Die nachzürischen Propheten*, Gotha, 1870) was originally prepared for Lange's *Bible-work*, but was rejected by Dr. Lange mainly on account of Pressel's views on the genuineness and integrity of Zechariah. It was, however, independently published, and was made use of, like other commentaries, by the authors of the respective sections in this volume.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Elliott desires to render his acknowledgments to the Rev. Reuben Dederick, of Chicago, and the Rev. Jacob Lotke, of Faribault, Minnesota, for valuable assistance in translating some difficult passages in Kleinert's Commentaries on Jonah, Nahum, and Habakkuk.

10. ZEPHANIAH. By Professors KLEINERT and ELLIOTT.  
11. HAGGAI. By JAMES FREDERICK McCURDY, M. A., Princeton, N. J.  
12. ZECHARIAH By Rev. TALBOT W. CHAMBERS, D. D., New York. (See special preface.)  
13. MALACHI. By Rev. JOSEPH PACKARD, D. D., Professor of Biblical Literature in the Theological Seminary at Alexandria, Virginia.

The contributors to this volume were directed carefully to consult the entire ancient and modern literature on the Minor Prophets and to enrich it with the latest results of German and Anglo-American scholarship.

The remaining parts of the Old Testament are all under way, and will be published as fast as the nature of the work will permit.

PHILIP SCHAFF.





THE  
BOOK OF JOEL.

EXPOUNDED

BY  
OTTO SCHMOLLER, PH. D.,  
URACH, WÜRTEMBERG.

*TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN, WITH ADDITIONAL NOTES AND A NEW VERSION  
OF THE HEBREW TEXT,*

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MILITARY ACADEMY, WEST POINT, N. Y.

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# JOEL.

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## INTRODUCTION.

### I. *The Person and Time of the Prophet.*

THE name Joel, יְהוֹאֵל, *i. e.*, *Jehovah is God*, is one of frequent occurrence in the Old Testament, having been borne by many persons mentioned in sacred history. For this reason our Prophet, whose name is found only in the title of this book, is distinguished as "The son of Pethuel." This is the only direct notice of him, and all the other incidents of his personal history must be inferred from the book that bears his name. He certainly lived in the kingdom of Judah, for in the call to the people to meet in the temple for the purpose of humiliation and repentance, Zion, and Jerusalem, and Judah alone are mentioned, ii. 15, 23, 32; iii. 1, 6, 16, 18. Of these localities he speaks not in the tone of a stranger, but as one who was personally identified with them. He makes no allusion whatever to the state of things in the kingdom of Israel. It is, therefore, highly probable that he resided and prophesied not simply within the limits of the kingdom of Judah, but specially at Jerusalem. Again, the way in which he speaks of the temple, the sacrifices, and the priesthood, raises the presumption that he was himself a priest.

The Time in which he lived is nowhere expressly stated, and cannot be fixed with absolute certainty. But we may determine it approximately from the relation between him and Amos. The latter begins his prophecy (i. 2) by a quotation from Joel iii. 16, and there is also a close resemblance between Amos ix. 13 and Joel iii. 18. Hence it may be inferred that Amos had the prophecy of Joel before him when he wrote his own. Now the time when Amos flourished may be easily fixed by the inscription and by the contents of his book, namely, in the days of the Judaic King Uzziah, and of the Israelitic King Jeroboam II. Joel, therefore, cannot belong to a later period. The design of his prophecy, and the condition of things which it implies, warrant the inference that he lived at an earlier day. Ewald justly says, "A later prophet would not have been so deeply moved as Joel was, by the terrible visitation of locusts and drought, as to call for a solemn act of national repentance on this ground alone. He would rather have seized the opportunity to point out and impress upon the people their spiritual defects, and while exhorting them to repentance, he would have told them specially of the sins from which they should break off, and return to the Lord." In Joel's days there is no evidence of the general corruption of manners that obtained in the times of Amos and Hosea. He makes no marked reference to particular sins. He does not speak of idolatry; on the contrary, the worship of Jehovah seems to have been maintained in the temple, at least in comparative purity. Israel, indeed, is exhorted to repent, but is at the same time encouraged by precious promises. He does not exhibit the heathen nations as the instruments of God's judgments on his own people; on the contrary, he ever sides with the latter, and he predicts the evils that shall overtake the heathen for what they have done to Israel. He makes no allusion to Assyria. The captivity of Israel by that power was an event beyond the horizon of the prophet. This much then is certain: that as the worship of Jehovah was still kept up in his day, Joel could not have belonged to the times of Joram, nor Ahaziah, nor Athaliah. He must have lived before or after their day. We cannot, however, place him very long before these

kings, as this would not consist with the reference to the invasion of Judah by the adjacent nations (iii. 3-6), which implied a weakened condition of the kingdom, nor with his probable allusion to the pillaging of Jerusalem by the Philistines and the Arabians in the reign of Joram. Again, the revolt of Edom, which did not occur earlier than the time of Joram, must be taken into account. Nor must Joel be separated too far from the days of Amos. For as Amos speaks of drought and locusts as judgments which God was about to inflict, we may infer that he had in view the same calamities as those described by Joel. It is natural to suppose that they came upon the kingdom of Judah to which Joel belonged, and that of Israel, which was the special field of Amos. Again, Amos speaks of the Philistines, the Tyrians, and Edom (ch. i.), and of their hostility to Israel, in a strain very similar to that employed by Joel (ch. iii.). Both prophets charge them with the same sin, and denounce against them the same punishment. Their sin was that of capturing Israelites and selling them as slaves; and although Joel names the Grecians as guilty of this crime, and Amos the Edomites, yet it is plain that they both had in view the same events. On this ground, Bleek holds that Joel, though older than Amos, was his contemporary, and places him in the time of Uzziah. Others think that as he nowhere alludes to Syria, whose capital Damascus is named by Amos (i. 3), nor to the invasion of Israel by that power under Hazael, in the days of Joash, he must have flourished in the early part of that reign, between B. C. 870-850. Certainly if he lived in the time of Joash it must have been in the early part of his reign, while he was still under the healthful influence of Jotham the high priest, for at a later day he introduced the worship of Baal. To this view Bleek objects that while Joel might have been expected to refer to the Syrian invasion if his book had been written very soon after that event, there would be no reason for naming it if he wrote it in the days of Uzziah, fifty years after it happened, since Syria was remote from Judah, and separated from it by the then existing kingdom of Israel. But to this it may be replied that Tyre and Sidon were also separated from Judah in the same way. Hence as both prophets refer to the same heathen nations, while Damascus is mentioned by Amos alone, this difference becomes all the more remarkable, and seems to warrant the inference that Joel could not have lived during the Syrian invasion. Though the events detailed by Joel, on account of which the nations concerned in them would be punished, must have been in the view of Amos, yet there must also have been other occurrences, such as the war with Syria, nearer to his time, and more immediately affecting the kingdom of Israel to which he belonged. Hence if Amos prophesied about B. C. 810, Joel must have done so about B. C. 850. But while Joel was older than Amos, it does not follow that he is the oldest of the prophets whose writings we possess. He has many points of contact with Obadiah (comp. Ob. 10, Joel iii. 19; Ob. 11, Joel iii. 3; Ob. 15, Joel i. 15, ii. 1, iii. 12, 17; Ob. 18, Joel iii. 8). It is a question which of these two prophets is the elder. It is not improbable, though by no means certain, that Joel had before him the book of Obadiah, when he wrote his prophecy. But we shall not pursue the discussion.

[Wünsche, the most recent expositor of this book,<sup>1</sup> fixes the time of Joel as somewhere between B. C. 860-850, and the grounds on which he bases his opinion are these:—

1. Joel charges the Philistines with having invaded Judah, captured the inhabitants, and sold them as slaves. Now according to 2 Chron. xxi. 10, this happened under Joram, B. C. 889-883. And they suffered the punishment predicted for their crime, under Uzziah, 2 Chron. xxvi. 6. Hence Joel could not have written this book before B. C. 889, nor later than 732.

2. The Phœnicians, *i. e.*, those of Tyre and Sidon, who in the days of David and Solomon were the allies, had in later times become the enemies of Judah. They too had been guilty of selling Jewish prisoners to the Grecians. Joel predicts that they also shall be punished for this crime,—a prediction fulfilled in the time of Uzziah, B. C. 811-759. This proves that Joel must have prophesied before the days of Uzziah.

3. The Edomites (iii. 19), are ranked among the enemies of Judah. They came from the same stock as the Jews, and on account of their sin against their brethren, their country was to become a perpetual desolation. From 2 Kings viii. 20, comp. with 2 Chron. xxi. 8, we learn that they became independent of Judah in the time of Joram, B. C. 889-883. They were again subdued, and their capital city Petra captured, B. C. 838-811, though the southern and eastern parts of their territory were not conquered until the reign of Uzziah, about B. C. 830. The prophet must have exercised his ministry, therefore, prior to the latter date.

<sup>1</sup> [*Die Weissagungen des Propheten Joel, übersetzt und erklärt*, von Dr. Aug. Wünsche. Leipzig, 1872. 4 767] elaborate work. — J. F.]

4. The fact that no mention is made of the invasion by the Syrians of Damascus, proves that Joel was one of the early prophets. This occurred in the latter part of the reign of Joash, B. C. 850-840.

5. The high antiquity of Joel is proved by the fact that he makes no reference to the Assyrian invasion of the two Jewish kingdoms in B. C. 790. On the other hand, Amos clearly alludes to it (vi. 14).

6. Another proof is derived from the relation between Joel and Amos. The latter was certainly well acquainted with and used the writings of the former.

7. The mention of the Valley of Jehoshaphat is a circumstance leading to the same conclusion. It took this name from the memorable victory there gained over Moab and Ammon. The way in which Joel refers to it shows that this event must have been a comparatively recent one, and that the memory of it was still fresh.

On these grounds we conclude that in fixing the time of this prophet, we cannot take for our *terminus a quo* an earlier date than B. C. 890, nor for our *terminus ad quem* a later one than 840. It most probably falls between B. C. 860-850. Joel therefore is the oldest of the Minor Prophets. — F.]

Of the *Ministry* of our Prophet, *i. e.*, as to the way in which he exercised it, we know nothing beyond what may be gathered from this book. Whether he first appeared simply as a preacher, or worked at the same time in other ways, cannot be determined. From what we know respecting the other prophets, it is more than probable that his prophetic teachings were originally oral, but if so, they must have been soon reduced to writing in the form in which we now have them. That he exerted a commanding influence on the popular mind is clear from ch. ii. 18, especially if this verse be taken in a historical sense. But in any view of it the passage shows that the prophet was conscious of his power; for he not only exhorts the nation to repentance, but imperatively demands it, and he does so with the evident assurance that he will be obeyed. For this reason we are inclined to think that he belonged to the order of the priesthood, and that his exhortations were, in the first instance, addressed to his brethren in that office.

## II. Of the Book.

There can be no question that the book bearing the name of Joel was written by himself. Not only is there no ground for doubt on this head, but all the positive evidence in the case is strongly on the same side; as, for example, the perfect unity that marks the book, one chapter fitting into another with the most complete exactness. Even if we admit, what some assert, that ch. ii. 10, etc., belongs to a later date than the other parts of the book, our remark holds good, for it is most closely connected with what precedes and follows it. Whether we have the discourses of the prophet precisely as they were delivered (supposing it to have been orally), or only the substance of them, is a point which cannot be determined, and is really one of no practical importance. Most probably we have them in the latter form, as the high finish and poetical diction of the book, specially in the first two chapters, suggest the idea of literary elaboration, rather than that of a simple reporting of oral discourses.

[Of the *Style* of the Prophet, the chief characteristic, says Dr. Pusey, is perhaps its simple vividness. Everything is set before us, as though we ourselves saw it. This is alike the character of the description of the desolation in the first chapter, the advance of the locusts in the second, or that more awful gathering in the valley of Jehoshaphat described in the third. The prophet adds detail to detail; each clear, brief, distinct, a picture in itself, yet adding to the effect of the whole. We can without an effort bring the whole of each picture before our eyes. Sometimes he uses the very briefest form of words, two words, in his own language, sufficing for each feature in his picture. One verse consists of five such pairs of words, i. 10. Then again the discourse flows on in a soft and gentle cadence, like one of those longer sweeps of an Æolian harp. This blending of energy and softness is perhaps one secret why the diction also of this prophet has been at all times so winning and so touching. Deep and full, he pours out the tide of his words with an unbroken smoothness, carries all along with him, yea, like those rivers of the new world, bears back the bitter restless billows which oppose him, a pure strong stream amid the endless heavings and tossings of the world. Poetic as Joel's language is, he does not much use distinct imagery. For his whole picture is one image. They are God's chastenings through inanimate nature, pic-

turing the worse chastenings through man. Full of sorrow himself, he summons all with him to repentance, priests and people, old and young, bride and bridegroom. The tenderness of his soul is evinced by his lingering over the desolation which he foresees. It is like one counting over, one by one, the losses he endures in the privations of others. Nature to him seemed to mourn; he had a fellow feeling of sympathy with the brute cattle which, in his ears, mourn so grievously; and if none else would mourn for their own sins, he would himself mourn to Him who is full of compassion and mercy. Amid a wonderful beauty of language he employs words not found elsewhere in the Holy Scripture. In one verse (i. 16), he has three such words. The extent to which the prophecies of Joel reappear in the later prophets has been exaggerated. The subjects of the prophecy recur; not, for the most part, in the form in which they were delivered. The great imagery of Joel is much more adopted and enforced in the New Testament than the Old, — of the locust, the outpouring of the Spirit, the harvest, the wine-treading, the wine-press. To this unknown Prophet, whom in his writings we cannot but love, but of whose history, condition, rank, parentage, birthplace, nothing is known, nothing beyond his name, save the name of an unknown father, of whom, moreover, God has allowed nothing to remain save these few chapters, — to him God reserved the prerogative, first to declare the outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon all flesh, the perpetual abiding of the Church, the final struggle of good and evil, the last rebellion against God, and the Day of Judgment.

The tone of Joel's writings, says Wünsche, indicates deep religious feelings, heartfelt experience, and warm sympathy. His moral ideas are lofty and pure, and testify to the religious knowledge and the holy life of the prophet. His poetry is distinguished by the soaring flight of his imagination, the originality, beauty, and variety of his images and similes. The conceptions are simple enough, but they are at the same time bold and grand. The perfect order in which they are arranged, the even flow and well compacted structure of the discourse, are quite remarkable. In his energy, power, and dignity, Joel reminds us of Micah; in his vivacity and lifelike freshness he resembles Nahum; in his originality and directness, in the bold range, and sublime strain of his ideas, he falls but a little below Isaiah; in his enthusiastic zeal for true religion, and his clear, earnest, penetrating insight into the moral disorders of his times, he resembles Amos. Joel threatens and warns; he descends into the innermost recesses of human nature, and he drags into the light of day, corruption, falsehood, and lukewarmness in the worship of Jehovah. Of our Prophet, Umbreit finely says: 'The Prophetic mantle which enrobed his lofty form, was worthy of his majestic spirit; its color is indeed dark and solemn, like the day of the Lord which he predicts, yet we see sparkling upon it the stars of the eternal lights of love and grace. — F.]

The *Occasion* of this book was a terrible visitation of Judah by locusts and drought. The prophet describes the devastation produced, and viewing it as the beginning of a great judgment day of the Lord, he calls upon the priests to appoint a day for national humiliation and prayer. This must have been done, since he, by divine authority, promises the people the richest blessings for the present and the future, as well as complete deliverance from all their enemies.

The book consists of *two Parts*, which must be carefully distinguished. They are as follows: —

Part I. includes chaps. i.—ii. 17; Part II. extends from ii. 19 to the end of ch. iii. They are connected together by the historical statement (ii. 18, 19).

Part I. The plagues already named, are described as a divine judgment. The call to repentance.

Ch. i. The unprecedented plague of locusts and drought is described, and those on whom it fell are called upon to lament over the desolation of the land caused by it; one of the worst results of it being the necessity for suspending the daily sacrifices. For this reason the priests are required to mourn themselves, and to summon all the inhabitants of the land to join with them in their lamentation.

Ch. ii. This visitation is simply a token that a great judgment day of the Lord is coming. The army of locusts, of which a graphic picture is given, is the host of the Lord, sent to do his will (vers. 1–11). Still the threatened judgment may be averted by timely repentance (vers. 12–14). Hence the priests should appoint a day of humiliation and prayer and should beseech the Lord to have mercy upon the nation as being his own people (vers. 14–17).

Part II. contains promises: (1) For the present (ii. 18–27). God will deliver his people

from the plague and amply repair the evil done by it, by new blessings, and so prove that Israel is his people. (2.) For the future still greater things are promised. The day of the Lord is surely coming, but to Israel it shall be a day of salvation, and a day of terror only to Israel's foes. This day shall be introduced by the outpouring of God's Spirit upon the whole people. There shall be at the same time terrible signs in the heavens and the earth, from which there is safety only in Zion. But there, all will be perfectly secure (ch. iii. 1-8). The day itself is described as one of deliverance for Israel, and of destruction for their enemies, *i. e.*, "the nations." These nations are reproached for their crimes against Israel, and shall be punished on account of them (vers. 9-16). Infliction of the punishment. The Lord assembles Israel and the nations, in the valley of Jehoshaphat. At first it seems as if the nations were on the point of storming the holy city, but then and there, amid terrible signs, they are annihilated by the Lord at one blow. The dawning of Israel's salvation described (vers. 17-20). Uninjured by their enemies, protected by their God, who dwells forever in the midst of them, his people enjoy the richest blessings.

What Joel says of the locusts is not to be taken simply as an allegory, nor as a merely figurative description of the hosts of war. Nor is the first chapter a prediction; on the contrary it describes his own experience.

*Importance of this Book.* We find that it was held in high consideration by the later prophets. We have already mentioned the use made of it by Amos. It is also quite plain that Isaiah used it (comp. Is. xiii. 3, 6, 8, 10, 13, and Joel, ii. 1-11; iii. 15, 16). That other later prophets had the book before them will be obvious to any one who examines a Bible with parallel references. Delitzsch, therefore, justly says, "Among the prophets who flourished from the time of Uzziah to that of Jeroboam, Joel unquestionably holds the position of a type or model, and after Amos, there is not one whose writings do not remind us of him." We may even claim for Joel (and Obadiah also if we regard him as one of the earlier prophets), a sort of fundamental significance for the whole series of later prophets, not only on account of his clear and precise prediction of the coming of the day of the Lord, but also because of the way in which he connects Israel with it. Even God's covenant people must look well to see how they stand, for in that day, repentance alone can help them. If this is wanting, if Israel departs from God, escape from the coming judgment will be impossible, — a truth which the later prophets exhibit with an ever-growing emphasis and distinctness. The prophecies of Joel are, it seems to me, fundamental in another sense, namely, in the promises they give respecting Israel's future. Though Israel must first suffer on account of their sins, yet the prophet anticipates with confidence the time when they shall return in penitence to God, and predicts that they shall win a glorious triumph, while all their enemies, *i. e.*, the world, shall be utterly destroyed. Thus Joel (uniting himself, as it were, with Obadiah in unfolding and confirming the prophetic promises on this head), fixes with an assured faith the position of Israel, as God's own people, and foretells their glorious victory over all their foes, though the latter may, for the present, bring upon them much shame and sorrow. What the eye sees cannot be an object of faith, which has to do with things for the time being invisible. Accordingly Joel has given a key-note (much more full than that of Obadiah's), which was repeated by the later prophets; he unfurled a standard, so to speak, which shall never cease to wave on high. The later prophets would witness the deep humiliation of God's people by the nations, *i. e.*, the world power; they would have to announce the total overthrow of the commonwealth of Israel, the annihilation of its political existence, as a well-deserved punishment for their sins. But notwithstanding this, all that Joel had promised would be realized; the day of the Lord was surely coming for the heathen, — a day of fearful recompense to them, but to his own people a day of deliverance and eternal salvation. So we find that in spite of the denunciations against the chosen people on account of their apostasy, in spite of the judgments to be inflicted upon them through the agency of the heathen, the faith and hope of the prophets in regard to the future of Israel are never shaken. They perpetually recur to the promise that the Lord will not cast off his people. A remnant shall survive. In this remnant Jehovah will be glorified, and will show that his ultimate design was not to destroy his people, but to bestow upon them fresh favors, yea far higher ones than their fathers enjoyed. This promise becomes more and more closely allied to the hope of a Messiah, and gives to it a more and more positive shape. This hope of a Messiah is the solid basis of all other hopes of Israel's future and glorious destiny. Joel, indeed, does not in express terms describe this Messianic foundation, as it may be called, but he has a general conception of it, and for this

reason we have said that his prophecy may properly be called a fundamental one, *i. e.*, with reference to those on the same subject, in later times.

### III. *Literature of the Book* (exclusive of Commentaries on the Minor Prophets as a whole)

Sebast. Tusciani, *Erem. Augustin. Comment. in Joel*, Colon., 1556; *Joel cum Adnot. et Versione trium Rabbin.*, per Gilb. Genebrand, Paris, 1563; Eli Schadaeus, *Synopsis Joel*, Argent., 1588; F. Bunny, *Enarratio in Joel*, Lond., 1588, 1595; J. Mathiæ, *Prælectiones in Joel*, Basil, 1590; S. Simonidis, *Comm. in Joel*, Cracov, 1593; Sol. Gesner, *Comm. in Joel*, Viteb., 1614; J. H. Ursinus, *Comm. in Joel*, Francov., 1641; Ed. Pocock, *Comm. in Proph. Joel*, Lips., 1695; Haseus, *Joel Illustrata*, Bremen, 1697; J. J. Schurrman, *Proph. Joel*, Wesel, 1700 (also Holland version, 1703); Sam. Chandler, *Paraphrase and Critical Comment. on Joel*, London, 1735; C. F. Bauer, *Introd. in Joel*, Wittemb. 1741; G. N. Richter, *in Joel*, Viteb., 1747; Baumgarten, *Auslegung des Joel*, Halle, 1756; P. Conz, *Dissert. de Charact. Poet. Joels*, Tub., 1783; J. Buttner, *Joel olim Hebræus*, Coburg, 1784; J. R. Eckerman, *Joel metrisch übersetzt und erklärt*, Lubeck und Leipzig, 1786; Justi, *Joel übersetzt und erklärt*, Leipzig, 1792; A. Svanborg, *Joel Latine Versus, et Notis philol. illustrata*, Upsal, 1806; F. A. Holzhausen, *Comment.*, 1829; K. A. Credner, 1831; A. Wünsche, *Die Weissagungen des Propheten Joel, übersetzt und erklärt*, Leipzig, 1872. Among practical expositors, may be named, J. Diederich, *der Proph. Joel, kurz erklärt*, Leipzig, 1861.

# THE PROPHET JOEL.

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## PART FIRST.

### THE JUDGMENT AND CALL TO REPENTANCE.

#### CHAPTERS I. 1-II. 17.

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#### SECTION I.

#### *Complaint of the Desolation of Judah by Locusts and Drought.*

#### CHAPTER I.

- 1 The word of Jehovah which came to <sup>1</sup> Joel, the son of Pethuel.
- 2 Hear this, ye <sup>2</sup> old men,  
And give ear <sup>3</sup> all ye inhabitants of the land!  
Hath such <sup>4</sup> a thing been in your days,  
Or even in the days of your fathers?
- 3 Tell it <sup>5</sup> to your children,  
And your children to their children,  
And their children to another generation.
- 4 What the palmer worm <sup>6</sup> hath left, the locust hath eaten,  
And what the locust hath left, the beetle hath eaten,  
And what the beetle hath left, the caterpillar hath eaten.
- 5 Awake <sup>7</sup> ye drunkards, <sup>8</sup> and weep,  
And cry out <sup>9</sup> all ye drinkers of wine  
On account of the new wine (or must), <sup>10</sup>  
For it is cut off (removed) from your mouth.
- 6 For <sup>11</sup> a people <sup>12</sup> hath invaded <sup>13</sup> my land, <sup>14</sup>  
Mighty and numberless;  
Their teeth are the teeth of a lion,  
And they have the jaw teeth of a lioness.
- 7 They have laid waste my vine, <sup>15</sup>  
And barked (or broken) my fig trees;  
They have made it quite bare, <sup>16</sup> and cast it away;  
Its branches are made white.
- 8 Lament <sup>17</sup> like a bride <sup>18</sup>  
Girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth.
- 9 Cut off is the meat offering and the drink offering from the house of Jehovah;  
The priests mourn  
The ministers <sup>19</sup> of Jehovah.
- 10 The field is wasted, <sup>20</sup>  
The land mourneth, <sup>21</sup>  
For the corn is destroyed,  
The new wine is dried up,  
The oil <sup>22</sup> fails.
- 11 Be ashamed ye husbandmen,  
Howl ye vine-dressers,

For the wheat and for the barley<sup>23</sup> ;  
Because the harvest of the field hath perished.

- 12 The vine is dried up,  
And the fig tree faileth,  
The pomegranate, also the palm, and the apple tree (quince)  
All the trees of the field are withered,  
So that joy is dried up<sup>24</sup> from the sons of men.
- 13 Gird yourselves and lament, ye priests,  
Cry out ye ministers of the altar ;  
Come, lie all night in sackcloth  
Ye ministers of my God,  
For the meat offering and the drink offering  
Are withheld from the house of your God.
- 14 Sanctify a fast,  
Appoint a solemn assembly,  
Gather the elders,  
And all the inhabitants of the land  
In the house of Jehovah your God ;  
And cry unto Jehovah.
- 15 Alas for the day !  
Because the day of Jehovah is at hand ;  
It will come like<sup>25</sup> a tempest from the Almighty (Shaddai).
- 16 Is not the food cut off before our eyes ?  
Joy and gladness from the house of our God ?
- 17 The grains<sup>27</sup> (seeds) are rotten<sup>27</sup> under their clods,<sup>27</sup>  
The garner are destroyed,  
The barns<sup>27</sup> are broken down,  
Because the corn is withered.
- 18 How the beasts groan !  
The herds of cattle are perplexed,  
Because they have no pasture ;  
Even the flocks of sheep perish.
- 19 Unto Thee, O Jehovah, will I cry,  
For the fire hath devoured all the pastures of the plain,  
And the flame hath burned all the trees of the field.
- 20 Even<sup>28</sup> the beasts of the field<sup>29</sup> cry unto Thee  
For the streams of water are dried up,  
And the fire hath devoured the pastures of the plain (wilderness)

#### TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

1 Ver. 1. — The preposition  $\text{ל}$  indicates direction, and like the Arab.  $\text{إلى}$  includes ordinarily the *terminus ad quem*. Sept.  $\delta\varsigma \epsilon\gamma\epsilon\eta\theta\eta \pi\rho\omicron\varsigma \text{'I}\omega\eta\lambda$ .

2 Ver. 2. —  $\text{הַיְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ}$ . The Heb., unlike the Arab., has no proper vocative, and hence the simple noun with  $\text{אֱלֹהֵינוּ}$  and the article takes its place.

3 Ver. 2. —  $\text{הַיְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ}$ , denom. verb from  $\text{הָיָה}$ ; it is stronger than  $\text{הָיָה אֵלֵינוּ}$ , but is only used in poetry.

4 Ver. 2. — The dagesh in the second  $\text{וְיָבֵשׁ}$  is the *dag. forte conj.*

5 Ver. 3. —  $\text{וְיָבֵשׁ}$ . The fem. suffix, which according to a peculiar Heb. idiom stands for the neut., has for its antecedent  $\text{הַיְהוָה}$ . The prep.  $\text{עַל}$  denotes the object of the discourse; it is used like the Lat. *super*, and Gr. *ὑπέρ*.

6 Ver. 4. — There is little difference of opinion in regard to the etymology of the names of the insects mentioned in this verse. — נָחַץ from the same root = to cut off. אֲרֵבָה, the most common name for locust, from רָבַח, to multiply לִלְקוֹץ from the same root, to lick up. חָסִיל from חָסַל, to consume. Expositors are, however, very much divided as to whether these terms are names of the locust at different stages of its growth, or of different species of insect. Bp. Newcome renders them, the grasshopper; the locust, the devouring locust; the consuming locust. Hitzig, Keil, and others regard them as simply poetical epithets of one and the same species of locust. It is hardly possible to give their exact equivalents in English.

7 Ver. 5. — הִקְיִינוּ from קוּץ, to cut off, to separate, then to arouse, or awaken; the opposite of the onomatopoeic word דָּרַם to snore, to sleep heavily.

8 Ver. 5. — שְׂכֹרִים, from שָׁכַר, a strong drink made of honey, raisins, dates, and other fruits. Hence the word = notorious drunkards.

9 Ver. 5. — וְהִלִּילֵנוּ, from the onomatopoeic הִלַּל, to howl, complain.

10 Ver. 5. — עָסִים is the fresh sweet juice of the grape, and other kinds of fruit, as the pomegranate, Song of Sol. vii. 8, and is to be distinguished from תִּירוֹשׁ, new wine, strictly so called. The former must have been a favorite drink of the old Hebrews.

11 Ver. 6. — כִּי makes the connection between this and the preceding verse.

12 Ver. 6. — גֹּיִם denotes a heathen, hostile people, and differs from עַם, though the distinction between the two words is not always observed. See Text. notes on Obadiah, ver. 1.

13 Ver. 6. — עָלָה עַל, lit. gone up, upon, perhaps with reference to the fact that Palestine is higher than the countries around it; but the word is often used in the more general sense: to approach, to enter, etc., where the region is a level one.

14 Ver. 6. — "My land," אֶרְצִי, *i. e.*, not the land of Jehovah, nor simply the native land of Joel, but the land with which he was allied as the prophet of the Lord.

15 Ver. 7. — גַּפְנֵי, "my vine," — not the vine of the Lord, but of the Prophet speaking in his name

16 Ver. 7. — הִשָּׁתַף lit., "peeling it have peeled it," *i. e.*, completely.

17 Ver. 8. — אֱלֹהֵי, *imper. fem. of אֱלֹהִים*, and *ἀπ. λεγ.*, like the Chald. and Syr. אֱלֵהּ. The more usual form is הֵאֱלִיל. Many expositors, without reason, take it as a *denom.* from אֱלֹהִים, God.

18 Ver. 8. — The proper Heb. word for virgin is עַלְמָה. The word here used denotes a bride, *i. e.*, a young woman espoused. See Is. vii. 14; Matt. i. 23.

19 Ver. 9. — מְשָׁרְתָי. Ministers, from שָׁרַת, to serve. It denotes free and honorable service, *e. g.*, of the temple in contrast with עֲבָד which denotes the enforced service of slaves.

20 Ver. 10. — שָׂדֵה שְׂדֵה. A paronomasia. The root שָׂדַד has in *Kal* first the intrans. sense to be strong, next the trans. sense, to use strength, *i. e.*, to waste, to desolate. שְׂדֵה denotes specially wheat or barley fields, then woodland, *sa. is* where cattle fodder; אֲדָמָה, farmland generally.

21 Ver. 10. — אֲבֵבָה, the Sept. and Arab. versions take this as an *imper.*, and render it "Mourn! O land."

22 Ver. 10. — יִצְהָר, from the root יָצַהַר, to be clear, *i. e.*, the oil newly pressed and clarified; as distinguished from שֶׁמֶן, fat.

23 Ver. 11. — עַל־הַזֶּה. The prep. עַל, as in vers. 5, 7, marks the cause. הַזֶּה and שְׁעוֹרָה are the two kinds of דָּגָן: the one kind of grain being used as food by men, the other chiefly by cattle, though the very poor used both.

24 Ver. 12. — כִּידְבִישׁ. We have here what is called *constructio pregnans* = שְׁשׂוֹן דְּבִישׁ וּדְבִישׁ, joy has withered and fled away.

25 Ver. 15. — כִּנְשׂוֹד. The expression is regarded by some as a sort of proverbial one. כִּ is not pleonastic, nor the so-called *כִּ veritatis*, but indicates likeness in quality or degree.

26 Ver. 15. — "From Shaddai — the Almighty." The Rabbins, Raschi, Abarbanel, and Maimonides see in this name a profound mystery, because it is a noun compounded of the *insep. pronoun*, שָׁ, with *patach notat*, and הַי, or דְּהַי to hold. The rendering of the Sept., *καὶ ὡς θαλασπῶρια ἐκ θαλασπῶριος ἤξει*, is wholly inadmissible.

27 Ver. 17. — The three *ἀπαξ λεγόμεν.* words in this verse, render it both as to etymology and grammar, one of the most difficult in the whole book, עֲבָשׁוּ, according to Aben Ezra and Kimchi, means "rotted;" "perished," Newcome; "dried up," Pusey, Wünsche. Some light is cast on the sense of פְּרִדוֹת, by the Syr. *ܦܪܝܘܬܐ*, seed, corn and the Chald. פְּרִד, grain. In form the word is the Paül participle of פָּרַד. The third word, בְּגִבְרֹת, is probably from the root גָּבַח — found only in Judg. v. 21, — which in all the dialects has the sense of to bear or carry away. The Arab. حَبْرَف, denotes the breaking up of the soil by the plough. مَرَبْرَف, therefore, may be a lump of soil, a clod, such as is thrown up by the plough. So the old Jewish expositors have understood it. In בְּמִגְרֹת we have another *ἀπαξ λεγ.* — yet there can be little doubt as to its meaning. The מ local is prefixed. Newcome renders it "store-house." Tregelles, "granaries, or cells for keeping grain."

28 Ver. 20. — **ב** here as in ver. 13, marks an increase of the general calamity.

29 Ver. 20. — The construction of the *fem. sing.* with the plur. noun is common in poetry, and is proper here because **בְּהֵמוֹת** is used in a collective sense. This term denotes domestic cattle. — F.]

## EXEGETICAL.

Vers. 2-4. (Hear this ye old men,—) the caterpillar hath eaten. A call is made upon the inhabitants of Judah, and especially the old men, to testify that an unheard-of thing had happened,—an event to be told to their posterity, namely, the complete desolation of the land by successive swarms of locusts.

Ver. 2. (Old men.) They are named because their memory goes back the farthest. The calamity might well be deemed extraordinary if they could recall nothing like it. Inhabitants of the land, *i. e.*, of Judah, as is evident from what follows ver. 14, ii. 1. **זִקְנֵי** refers to what is stated in ver. 4. In vers. 2, 3 there is an allusion to Exod. x. 2-6, where the plague of locusts in Egypt is spoken of.

Ver. 4. Swarms of locusts come, each one devouring what its predecessor had left. This, however, is not described in a dry, prosaic way. As the locusts appear four times, they bear four distinct names. Their proper name is **אֲרָבָה**, the others are poetic ones. These names are not used simply to denote the changes which the locusts undergo, nor their invasion of the land during successive years, as this would not consist with the statement that what one kind had left, another had eaten. The preterite **אָכַל** is to be taken in its proper sense. The whole chapter speaks of something that has actually happened. The desolation is described in detail, one feature of it after another being depicted in such a way as to arouse those affected by it to earnest prayer.

Verses 5-7. Awake ye drunkards.—Its branches are made white. The drunkards are called upon to mourn, to show poetically how complete is the desolation of the vineyards. At the same time, this is to be regarded as a punishment for the sins of the people, who are summoned to repent, though this last idea is not yet explicitly expressed.

Ver. 6. The locusts are represented under the figure of a hostile army. They are not to be regarded as a type of such an army, as if the passage was simply allegorical. Yet the idea of enmity to Israel implied in the word **גֹּיִם**—a heathen people,—must not be lost sight of, for these locusts actually ravage the land of Israel. Hence there is no ground for taking **עֲלֶיהָ** otherwise than as a preterite, nearly in the sense of a future, as predicting something to come. **אֶרֶץ** is the land of the prophet as speaking in the name of the people. Jehovah himself does not speak directly, comp. v. 13. The arms of these invaders are their teeth, which grind like those of a lion. The jaw-teeth of the lioness protecting or avenging her young are added by way of climax.

Ver. 7. The vine and fig tree. These are added because they are among the most valuable of fruit trees, comp. Hos. ii. 14. **לִרְצָרְצָהּ** is properly that which is broken off, *i. e.*, a fragment of wood, splinter, chip. **תִּשְׁפָּהּ**, made bare, by barking or paring, so as to peel off. The bark is thrown away; and the whole vine is made white or bleached by the barking of it.

Vers. 8-10. (Lament like a bride,— the oil fails.) The lamentation of the drunkards is simply a prelude to what follows. It would be a mistake to suppose that sensual pleasures and enjoyments alone are meant. The thing at stake was so much greater than these, that the whole land had cause to mourn.

Ver. 8. Judah is here regarded as a wife, and hence the fitness of comparing this lamentation to that of a young bride mourning the husband of her youth. Certainly no judgment could be more severe than one that made it impossible to present "the meat and drink offerings." Hence the priests had reason to mourn; and Judah, in danger of losing the visible emblems of the presence of his God, is fitly compared to the young wife who had lost her husband. These offerings could not be presented because everything was destroyed. [The corn, wine, and oil were essential ingredients of these offerings, and every sacrifice would be imperfect without them. The locusts and the drought combined must also have caused a great dearth of the animals used in sacrifice. — F.]

Vers. 11-12. Be ashamed, ye husbandmen,— from the sons of men. The husbandmen and vine-dressers are next addressed. The worst feature of the desolation, already mentioned, is not again noticed until we come to ver. 13. In ver. 11, **הִקְבִישׁוּ**, **הִקְלִילוּ**, **הִבִּישׁוּ**, are imperfects. **הִקְבִישׁוּ**, from **קָבַשׁ** (perhaps to distinguish it from **הִקְבִּישׁוּ** the Hiphil of **קָבַשׁ**, here without the **ל** which precedes and follows it), to be ashamed, to grow pale. Going into their fields and finding nothing there, they are ashamed.

Ver. 12 adds the reason for their lamentation. Besides the vine and the fig, other noble trees are mentioned which may have been under the special care of the vine-dresser; as well as the trees of the field generally. **הִקְבִּישׁוּ שָׂשׂוֹן** here also the Hiph. of **בָּיַשׁ**, to grow paler. Joy becomes, as it were, ashamed; she withdraws herself, and is no more seen.

Vers. 13-17. Gird yourselves and lament ye Priests,— the corn is withered. The discourse returns to what had been complained of in ver. 9, as the worst feature of the calamity, namely, the inability to offer sacrifices. Here (ver. 13) the priests are again called upon to lament the want of materials for the temple service. "Gird yourselves," *i. e.*, with sackcloth or hair-cloth. "Pass the night," *i. e.*, even in the night-time their lamentations on this account should continue. [They should weep between the court and the altar. See 1 Kings xxi. 27. There was nothing strange in this direction, for there was no intermission in the temple service by day or night. See Ps. cxxxiv. 1. — F.] "Ministers of my God," the God whose prophet I am. [The suffix of the first person shows that the prophet, on the one hand, stood apart from the priests, and on the other, stood in a very near relation to God as his organ, and therefore elevated far above all other ranks and conditions of men. — Wünsche.<sup>1</sup> F.]

<sup>1</sup> [Wünsche thinks that this circumstance shows that Joel could not have belonged to the priestly order. But this would be overstraining the sense of "my" — F.]

The phrase "your God," is immediately afterward used, and repeated in ver. 14, hence it must not be supposed that the prophet intended, or was obliged to separate himself wholly from the priests. There must be fasting as well as lamentation. This was to be observed not by the priests alone; on the contrary, the whole people must be assembled in the temple, and there in the midst of these masses the priests should cry unto the Lord, "Sanctify a fast," because fasting was held to be, in the popular estimation, a holy, religious service.

**וַיִּצְעֲקוּ**. The word **וַיִּצְעֲקוּ** ordinarily denotes a religious assembly, one to observe a great festival. Furst thinks that it comes from **צָעַף**, to fix, to settle, *i. e.*, a fixed time,<sup>1</sup> hence to proclaim a fast day. The "old men," — not the elders in the official sense of the term, as one might perhaps infer from the E. V. — who had been called upon (ver. 2) to testify that no such calamity had ever before happened, must be present in this assembly, as well as those who are to hear their testimony. **וַיִּצְעֲקוּ**, to cry out as an expression of want, or distress. The substance of this "cry," or complaint, is presented in the verses that immediately follow. This complaint probably extends as far as ver. 17, in which the desolation of the land is set forth as the ground of the lamentation. Ver. 18 seems to begin a new section, in which the cries of the lower animals are represented as mingled with the complaints of men.

Ver. 15. *Alas for the day, i. e.*, the present time of desolation. This cry of distress is caused by the nearness of the day of the Lord. The character of this day may be learned from its results. It is close at hand; it is coming as a desolating scourge from the Almighty, and its effect will be such as to show that it could come only from Him. That this terrible state of things had already begun is evident from ver. 16. The meat is cut off; the voice of joy and gladness is no longer heard in the temple. Why? Because it is not possible to present there the usual thank-offerings. Besides the invasion of the locusts which had eaten up every green thing, there was an unusual drought (ver. 18) which had greatly intensified the calamity that had befallen Judah. In consequence of these things the granaries were empty, the barns had gone to ruin, for the corn had failed. The question arises, how is the passage from ver. 13 and onwards to be viewed? It is commonly taken to be a new section, the subject of which is the call to repentance. Keil thus explains its connection with the preceding context: "Lamentation and mourning alone will not bring release from the calamity: with these must be conjoined repentance and prayer to Jehovah, who can avert every evil." But though this view seems to be favored by vers. 14, 15, it really mistakes the prophet's train of thought. The call to repentance does not come formally into view until ch. ii. 12, though the way had been prepared for it, ii. 1. Now the description of the day of the Lord in ii. 2 has a relation to what is said in i. 15, so that the call to repentance may be said to have its root and nothing more, in this earlier section. The special design of ch. i. is to lay a foundation for what is to follow, by exhibiting the magnitude of Judah's distress, and the special reason for repentance. The intensity of the mourning showed the magnitude of the judgment.

<sup>1</sup> [The etymology of the word is right, but the sense which Furst suggests is an arbitrary one, and does not accord with its evident meaning in the many passages in

The priests (ver. 13) and the people at large (ver. 15) are alike called upon to recognize the judgment, and to return to God who had sent it. This passage and ch. ii. 15 seem to be exactly alike in purport, but there are differences between them which should not be overlooked. They differ in regard to the motive and the object of the proposed fasting and humiliation. In ch. ii. 15 the priests are charged to call a solemn assembly, because in this way they might hope for God's mercy. In ch. i. 14 the ground of lamentation is the suspension of sacrifices, which not only affected the public worship of God in the temple as conducted by the priesthood, but also the immediate interests of the people themselves. They also differ in the object proposed. In ch. ii. 15 the priests in the people's name and behalf beseech the mercy of the Lord. In vers. 14, 15 they cry to Him, "Alas." They bring their complaint before the Lord, because this great calamity bears upon their relation to Him as his ministers, depriving them of the means for carrying on divine service, and hence they cry out, "the day of the Lord is near." So thorough is the desolation that one may well say "the day of the Lord is at hand." Things have this look. But as yet there is no word about repentance, confession of sin, and return to God. The calamity, in its unequalled magnitude, and far-reaching effects, just now fills the prophet's mind. He naturally regards it as coming from God's hand, but he here says nothing about the cause of it. The reason for deeming it a divine infliction is only implied in the connection between the devastation and what the day of the Lord would bring.

Vers. 17, 18 show that the prophet is not yet exhorting the people, but is still describing the great calamity. It would be strange, therefore, for him to introduce in ver. 13 a topic so entirely new, as repentance. Nor do we find in these verses the proper motives for such an exercise. Logically, then, these two passages are quite distinct, the one being a call to lamentation, and the other a call to repentance. When the prophet, in i. 14 and ii. 15, exhorts the priests to appoint a fast and call a solemn assembly, he does not mean that this should be done twice, at two different times. The one call is simply a repetition of the other, but in a different sense. He wishes the people to fast, and to meet in the temple, to mourn there with the priests, and that they should also manifest their penitence by prayer for mercy offered by the priests as their representatives.

Vers. 18-20. *How do the beasts groan, — the pastures of the wilderness.* The beasts of the field must suffer equally with men. This fact is used to illustrate the magnitude of the calamity. But as these dumb animals cannot describe their sufferings, the prophet himself becomes their interpreter, and as if sharing their distress, exclaims, **To Thee, O Jehovah, do I cry** — for help. That this appeal is in the name of the beasts of the field is evident from ver. 19. *The flame, the fire, vers. 19, 20 = the fierce heats that produced the drought.* The beasts include domestic and wild animals.

#### THEOLOGICAL.

1. We may here discuss the question whether the visitation of the locusts is to be regarded as an allegorical prediction of an invasion of the land by a hostile people, as most of the older expositors, which it occurs. It has the same sense here as in *Isa. lxxiii. 3-6; Num. xxix. 35; Deut. xvi. 8; 2 Chron. vii. 1; Neh. xiii. 18.* — [F.]

and more recently Hengstenberg and Havernick take it to be. They think that the prophecy of the desolation of the land begins in chap. i. If this be so, as there is no formal mention of the future, we must suppose that the prophet sees the approach of the calamity so vividly, that he pictures the future as a present reality. While this view may be admissible, it is not natural. On its face, the text describes not a future, but a present fact, and there is no exegetical necessity for assigning to it any other sense. We may also remark that the call to the old men to testify whether such a thing had happened in their day, and to the people generally to transmit the account of it to their children, would have no significance, if the event were a future one. Chap. i. certainly describes a devastation that had actually happened, and as no foreign foe had as yet invaded the land, it must have been caused by locusts and drought. It needs no proof that the word "people" (ver. 6) does not necessarily denote a real nation. Again, the devastation caused by locusts would be an inadequate type of an invasion of the land, since one of the essential features of the latter would be wanting, namely, the shedding of blood. The picture of the calamity in no way suggests the terrors caused by an inroad of foreign foes. The chapter simply treats of the damage done to the products of the earth, and the complaints of men in consequence of it. — But as regards chap. ii., the question whether the visitation of locusts is to be taken in an allegorical sense, is not so easily settled. Here the coming of "the day of the Lord" is for the first time distinctly announced, and in this connection there is a renewed mention of the destruction caused by locusts and drought. That this latter event should be made the theme of a prophetic discourse, is no way surprising, because Holy Scripture teaches us that all public calamities are divine dispensations designed to awaken men to a sense of their sins, and to bring them to repentance. What more natural, then, than that the prophets should, in God's name, threaten such calamities, and when they did come, interpret and apply them so as to arouse the people to penitence, so that they might escape still heavier judgments? A clear illustration of this is found in Amos vi. 6, and as he closely follows Joel, we may regard it as settled that the latter prophet had these calamities before his mind. But the prophet is a poet as well as a preacher of repentance; and so he presents a most vivid poetic picture of the great misfortune which had befallen Judah. In its surpassing magnitude, God's chastising hand was all the more manifestly displayed, and his voice was all the more distinctly heard calling his people to repent.

2. The memory of extraordinary events should be preserved in the popular mind. They thus become a tradition, or a history. Thus only can there be a continuous life in the case of individuals, of families, and of nations. This basis of history, namely, the remembrance of the experience of former generations, in the case of Israel is essentially a religious one. Here, events are manifestations of God, — of his mercy, or his judgment. As such they should never be forgotten, in order that the revelation of God to the consciousness of a nation may be maintained in an ever-living freshness.

3. Terrible as is the scourge which strikes at the means of subsistence in a land, in the prophet's eye this is not its worst result. In this case, for example, the greatest evil produced by it was the loss of the sacrifices in the house of God. The Temple was the visible sign and pledge of God's

dwelling in the midst of Israel as his people. But it was such only while divine worship was kept up in it, according to the due order, by the priests as the representatives of the people. The daily morning and evening sacrifice formed an essential part of this service; and on its continuance depended the continuance of God's covenant relation to his people [*i. e.*, not really, but visibly. — F.]. The suspension of the one suspended the other. Hence no greater misfortune could happen to Israel than the inability, caused by famine, to supply the Temple with the materials for these sacrifices. Joel, realizing fully the necessity of these offerings for the purpose before named, turns to the priests, here and in chap. ii., entreating them to call upon God themselves and to endeavor to bring the people to repentance. Such, in any case, was their present duty. How it might be in the future will be disclosed in chap. iii. Meanwhile it is manifest that no merely formal service would meet the exigency. Only true repentance would avail.

#### HOMILETICAL.

Vers. 1–2. [HENRY: The greatness of the judgment is expressed here in two things: (1.) It was such as could not be paralleled in the ages that were past; in history, or the memory of any living. Those that outdo their predecessors in sin, may justly expect to fall under greater and sorer judgments than any of their predecessors knew. (2.) It was such as would not be forgotten in the ages to come. We ought to transmit to posterity the memorial of God's judgments as well as of his mercies. — F.]

Ver. 3. How necessary it is that our children should be taught the will of God, and what his purpose is when He chastises us, so that the fear of his holy name may be deepened in our hearts.

Ver. 4. Here we learn the omnipotence of God, and how vainly human power is arrayed against Him, since He can employ the smallest and meanest insect to do his will.

Ver. 5. Ye drunkards who consume God's kindly gifts in intemperance and sin, know that your sin carries a curse with it, and that God can easily cut off the wine from your mouths, and punish you with years of famine.

[PUSEY: All sin stupefies the sinner. All intoxicate the mind, bribe and pervert the judgment, dull the conscience, blind the soul, and make it insensible to its own ills. God arouses those who will be aroused by withdrawing from them the pleasures wherein they offended Him. Weeping for things temporal may awaken the fear of losing things eternal. — F.]

Vers. 6–8. The Christian Church is God's vineyard. If at any time it yields not good fruit, but only wild grapes, it shall be laid waste.

[ROBINSON: Prevailing sins are often visited with corresponding judgments. The Lord in his righteous dealings withholds those gifts of his providence which have been abused. He takes from an ungodly people the means of gratifying their lusts, and leads them to repentance by afflictions which are not capriciously ordered, but with exactest wisdom are suited to their character. Be assured, the prosperity of the Church depends not on a grand ceremonial, or crowds of admiring devotees, or the countenance of the state, however desirable these things may be, but only on the favor of God, whose blessing, and whose Spirit will be withdrawn, if we defile his sanctuary with superstitious rites. — F.]

Ver. 9. No greater sorrow can befall the teachers and hearers of the Word, than the cessation of divine worship. Want of the means of livelihood must exert a very prejudicial influence on the public service of God. Under the old economy there would be, of necessity, a failure of tithes and offerings. So now, when people have a hard and constant struggle for the bare means of subsistence, they will be far behind others in knowledge of the truth, in the proper training of children, and in mutual love.

Ver. 10. How quickly the Lord can turn all human joy into sorrow! How comes it then, O sinner, that thou cleavest so closely to temporal things which may be taken away at any moment? What reason have we to praise the goodness of the Lord, who gives us fruitful seasons, and fills our hearts with gladness?

Ver. 11. Husbandmen are too apt to desire the blessings of the field through avarice, or for the sake of their own carnal enjoyment. Therefore God sometimes sends them a sad instead of a joyful harvest-time.

Vers. 9-12. [SCOTT: We are so dependent upon God in everything, that no human wisdom or power can provide plenty when He pleases to send scarcity; without his rain, the seed even must perish, the trees of the field must wither, and all our temporal joys must sicken and die, and such judgments are emblems of the great day of retribution. How stupid then are sinners who are insensible under such judgments, or only mourn with a rebellious and unhumbed sorrow.

PUSEY: The vine is the richness of divine knowledge, the fig the sweetness of contemplation and the joyousness in things eternal. Well is the life of the righteous likened to a palm, in that the palm below is rough to the touch, and in a manner enveloped in a dry bark, but above it is adorned with fruit, fair even to the eye; below it is compressed by the enfoldings of its bark, above it is spread out in amplitude of beautiful greenness. For so is the life of the elect, — despised below, beautiful above. — F.]

Vers. 13-14. Who shall blame God's ministers when they complain of the declension of religion? Who would not weep when he thinks of the miserable condition of many churches.

Fasting is one of the ways of deepening and manifesting repentance, sanctioned by Holy Scripture. When properly observed, the result will be to stimulate us to cry more earnestly to God. Under great calamities, men should be taught to look to God, not only in a general way, but they should be told to seek Him in special and appropriate exercises of penitence and prayer.

[HENRY: They that are employed in holy things are therein God's ministers, and on Him they attend. A people may be filling up the measure of their iniquity apace, and yet may keep up a course of external performances in religion. As far as any public trouble is an obstruction to the course of religion, it is to be on that account more than any other, sadly lamented, especially by the Lord's ministers.

PUSEY: The fast which the Lord approveth is that which lifteth up to Him hands full of alms-deeds, which is passed with brotherly love, which is seasoned with piety. What thou substractest from thyself, bestow on another, that thy needy neighbor's flesh may be recruited. — F.]

Vers. 15-18. When God punishes, He seeks our improvement; but if this does not follow, He will

utterly destroy. — The sufferings of the lower animals are caused by the sin of man.

[HENRY: Though it is common for the heart not to rue what the eye sees not, yet that heart is hard indeed which does not humble itself when God's judgments are *before the eyes*. If when God's hand is lifted up, men *will not see*, when his hand is laid on they *shall see*. — The house of our God is the proper place for *joy and gladness*; when David goes to the altar of God, it is to God *my exceeding joy*; but when *joy and gladness are cut off from God's house*, either by corruption of holy things, or the persecution of holy persons, when serious godliness decays, and love waxes cold, then it is time to cry to the Lord, time to cry *Alas!* — F.]

Vers. 19, 20. It is one of the special duties of a teacher of the Word to be constant in prayer to God. — God hears the cries even of dumb animals. Then, O my soul, trust Him in all thy troubles, and know that He will listen to thy cries as much more readily than to theirs, as thou art of more value than they. The prophet, in his appeal to God, is not ashamed to be found in fellowship with the beasts of the field. So the Divine Spirit, by way of arousing our faith, points us to the fact that God feeds the young ravens, and gives the cattle their food. Yet how readily can God turn all our joys into deepest griefs! How unexpectedly can He do this, and by what feeble means! How preposterous, then, for any to regard their earthly possessions as secure, and to boast of them! How plainly God shows us that we live only in and through his blessing, that everything we possess is his gift. How thankful we should be when He permits us to enjoy fully what He has bestowed upon us!

[HENRY: The prophet stirs them up to cry, to God.

(1) By his own example. He would not put them upon doing that which he would not resolve to do himself; nay, whether they would do it or no, he would.

NOTE. — If God's ministers cannot prevail to affect others with the discoveries of divine wrath, yet they ought to be themselves affected with them: if they cannot bring others to cry to God, yet they must themselves be much in prayer. In times of trouble we must not only *pray*, but *cry*, must be fervent and importunate in prayer; and to God, from whom both the destruction is, and the salvation must be, ought our cry always to be directed.

(2) By the example of the inferior creatures. *The beasts of the field* do not only *groan*, but they *cry unto Thee*. They appeal to thy pity, according to their capacity, and as if, though they are not capable of a rational and revealed religion, yet they had some dependence upon God by natural instinct. Much more will He put a favorable construction on the groanings of his own children, though sometimes so feeble, that they *cannot be uttered*.

SCOTT: God will hear the united prayers of the remnant of his servants, and often for their sakes will rescue a guilty nation from impending destruction.

PUSEY: O Lord, to Thee will I cry. This is the only hope left, and contains all hopes. From the Lord was the infliction; in Him is the healing. The prophet appeals to God by his own Name, the faithful Fulfiller of his promises, Him who is, and who had promised to hear all who call upon Him. Let others call to their idols, if they would, or remain stupid, the prophet would call unto God, and that earnestly. — F.]

## SECTION II.

*The Day of the Lord cometh! Repentance alone can avail to meet it Hence the Demand for a Day of Public Humiliation.*

## CHAPTER II. 1-17.

- 1 BLOW the trumpet<sup>1</sup> in Zion,  
Sound<sup>2</sup> an alarm on my holy mountain.<sup>3</sup>  
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble,  
Because the day of Jehovah cometh,<sup>4</sup>  
It is nigh at hand.
- 2 A day of darkness and of gloom,<sup>5</sup>  
A day of clouds, and of thick mists,<sup>6</sup>  
Like the morning<sup>7</sup> dawn spread upon the mountains;  
*So shall come* a people numerous and mighty,  
The like of which hath never been before,  
And the like of which shall not come again,  
In the years of many generations.
- 3 A fire devoureth before them,  
And behind them a flame burneth;  
Before them the land is as the garden of Eden,<sup>8</sup>  
And behind them a desolate wilderness,  
And nothing shall escape them.
- 4 Their appearance is like<sup>9</sup> the appearance of horses,  
And like horsemen shall they run.
- 5 Like the noise of chariots, on the tops of mountains<sup>10</sup> they shall leap  
Like the sound of a flame of fire devouring stubble.  
Like a strong people set in battle array.
- 6 Before them the people<sup>11</sup> are in pain,  
All faces gather paleness.<sup>12</sup>
- 7 They shall run like mighty men,  
They shall climb the wall like men of war;  
And they shall march, each one in his way,  
And they shall not turn aside<sup>13</sup> from their paths.
- 8 And no one shall press upon another,  
They shall march each one in his path;<sup>14</sup>  
And *though* they rush<sup>15</sup> upon the dart, they shall not be wounded.
- 9 They shall run to and fro in the city,  
They shall run upon the wall;  
They shall climb upon the houses,  
They shall enter behind the windows like a thief.
- 10 Before them the earth trembleth,  
The heavens quake,  
The sun and the moon shall be darkened,  
And the stars withdraw their brightness,
- 11 And Jehovah shall utter his voice before his host,  
For his army is very great,  
For he that executes his word is mighty;  
For great is the day of Jehovah, and very terrible,  
And who can endure it?

- 12 Yet even now,<sup>16</sup> saith Jehovah,<sup>17</sup>  
Turn unto me with all your heart,  
With fasting, and with weeping, and with lamentation,
- 13 And rend your heart, and not your garments.  
And return to Jehovah your God,  
For He is gracious and merciful,  
Slow to anger and of great kindness,  
And repenteth Him of the evil.
- 14 Who knoweth?<sup>18</sup> He may return and repent  
And leave a blessing behind,  
A meat-offering and a drink-offering  
For Jehovah your God.
- 15 Blow the trumpet in Zion,  
Sanctify a fast,  
Call a solemn assembly;
- 16 Gather the people,  
Sanctify a congregation,  
Assemble the old men,  
Gather the children,  
And those that suck the breasts;  
Let the bridegroom desert his chamber,  
And the bride her closet;
- 17 Between the porch and the altar,  
Let the priests weep,  
The ministers of Jehovah,  
And say,  
Spare thy people, O Jehovah,  
And give not thy heritage to reproach,  
That the heathen should rule over<sup>19</sup> (or use a bye-word against) them  
Wherefore should they say among the heathen (— the peoples)  
Where is their God?

## CRITICAL AND TEXTUAL.

1 Ver. 1. — The שופֵר of the Hebrews, according to Jerome, was a metal instrument in the shape of a horn, and had a tone of extraordinary power. Its root, שָׁפַר, to be bright, refers either to the metallic glitter of the instrument, or its clear ringing sound.

2 Ver. 1. — "And sound." And is omitted in the Vulg., Sept., Arab., Chald., and five MSS. omit ה. There is more energy in the passage without it.

8 Ver. 1. — "Holy mountain." הַר שֵׁשִׁי is a noun, lit., "mountain of my holiness." The adjct. קָדוֹשׁ is only applied to persons and never to things.

4 Ver. 1. — "The day — cometh." The perf. בָּ is used as the present to express the certainty of the event.

5 Ver. 2. — "Darkness and gloom." חֹשֶׁךְ is often connected with אֶשֶׁךְ, to express a kind of climax. Its root is not used in Heb., but we find it in the Arab. **أَسْل**.

6 Ver. 2. — "Clouds and thick mists." עָרַבַל, formed apparently from עָרַב, a cloud, and אָפַל, to be dark, corresponding to the Greek οὐρανόη. Here, too, a gradation is marked.

7 Ver. 2. — "Like the morning dawn," etc. The Vulg. renders it, "as the morning spread upon the mountains, a people much and mighty," but the accents will not admit of this. Newcome has it, "like the dusk," but this suggests evening rather than morning. It properly means the gray of the morning, while the sun is still far below the horizon. It is one of the names of the Nile, from the turbid color of its water.

8 Ver. 5. — "Eden." עֵדֵן, an old Semit. word, found also in various dialects in the sense of pleasure, like the Gr. ἠδονή. In the sing. with zere on the penult., it always means Paradise. With seghol on the penult., it is the name of a part of Mesopotamia. In the plur. form it denotes pleasures. Ps. xxxvi. 9; 2 Sam. i. 24.

9 Ver. 4. — "Is like." כִּי is here used παραβολικῶς compar., and not, as Theodoret supposes, ἐπιτακτικῶς intens.

1 Ver. 5. — "On the tops of mountains," etc. עֲלֵ-רִיבֹנֵי אֲשֵׁי must be connected with רָרְרָרְרָר, they shall leap, and not with בְּקָרוֹל; the latter union is forbidden by the accents, and by the use of the word "chariots," whose "noise" is only heard on level ground.

11 Ver. 6. — “Peoples.” The plural form עַמִּים is used, not as Credner supposes, with reference to the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, but simply to denote people generally.

12 Ver. 6. — “Paleness.” כַּזָּהָרִים is variously understood. The Sept. render the clause ὡς πρός καυμάχους, as the burning of a pot. The Chald., Syr., Vulg., Arab., “become like a pot or have the blackness of a pot.” But there is nothing in the nature of the thing, or in the etymology of the word, to warrant the “blackness” of our E. V. Cramer explains rather than translates the words: “all faces contract their muscles.” The root of the word is כָּזַר, to be beautiful, to glow; and it literally means “ruddiness.” This gathers, or withdraws itself, and the countenance becomes pale.

13 Ver. 7. — “They shall not turn aside.” יַעֲזֹבוּ is variously explained. Many expositors take it in the sense of *pervertere*, as if it were יַעֲזֹבוּהוּ, to bend. Others get its meaning from the Arab. صَلَطَ, to split, or divide. One MS., De Ross, has the reading, יִכְרְעוּהוּ, they strike not out behind, like horses. The sense is, they move in a compact mass, bending neither to the right nor the left, forwards nor backwards.

14 Ver. 8. — “Each one in his path,” lit., the mighty one, גִּבּוֹר, used here poetically for אֱלֹהִים.

15 Ver. 8. — “Though they rush,” etc. The meaning of this line is plain enough, *i. e.*, nothing can arrest their march; but the renderings of it are various, growing out of the senses given to בעָד. De Wette renders it: “Und zwischen Waffen stürzen sie hindurch, brechen den Zug nicht ab.” — Wünsche: “Und hinter dem Wurfpiess fallen sie, nicht brechen sie ab.” On the whole, I prefer the rendering of Tregelles: “Though they rush,” etc.

16 Ver. 12. — “Yet even now.” Credner, without reason, supplies a שֹׁרֵב after עֲתָה.

17 Ver. 12. — “Saith Jehovah.” אֵלֶּם is most frequently used as the part. pass. constr. = “the voice of Jehovah is.”

18 Ver. 14. — “Who knoweth.” The interrogative particle אֵיךְ is omitted here as in Jon. iii. 9. The question is expressed only by the tone. Holz. takes the phrase כִּי יוֹדֵעַ to = every one knows, *i. e.*, it is quite certain; but this sense is too absolute.

19 Ver. 17. — “Rule over.” The primary meaning of מִשַׁל is to make like, and in its nominal form it has the sense of similitude, parable, proverb, song. Scholars have been a good deal puzzled how to reconcile the signification of *making like and ruling*, which last sense the word undoubtedly has in many places. When used in this last sense it is usually followed by כִּי, rarely (Wünsche says never) by עַל or אֵל. Tregelles renders it in this place, “to sing a song of derision,” and De Wette, “spotter,” which, I think, the context favors. Pusey and Wünsche insist on the sense of our E. V. “rule over.” — F.]

#### EXEGETICAL.

This portion of the prophecy consists of two parts. The first is contained in vers. 1-11, in which the prophet explains more fully than he had before done, the misery that was coming on the land, a harbinger of the great and terrible day of the Lord. The second part includes vers. 12-17, and declares that timely repentance would secure God's gracious help, and therefore that the priests should earnestly deal with the people to this end.

Ver. 1. Blow the Trumpet in Zion. This is a call to the priests. They must give a signal of alarm from Zion, which is to be understood not in the local sense, but as including the whole of Jerusalem. Then comes the more precise locality, “the holy mountain.” The design of this signal is to arouse the inhabitants of the land, and to apprise them that an event of terrible magnitude is close at hand. The Day is the judgment day of the Lord. There is a climax in the clauses announcing its approach, “it is coming,” “it is near,” *i. e.*, its coming is of an event of the far distant future, but it will be very soon.

Ver. 2. The Day is one of darkness. Four terms are used to show how intense it will be. See Ex. x. 22; Deut. iv. 11. It will be darker than that of Egypt, and than that of Sinai. Here the “darkness” is to be understood in a literal sense, for by the vast swarms of locusts, the sun would be obscured (ver. 10, and Exod. xiv. 15). That the prophet had these swarms of locusts in view is evident from what follows. כִּשְׁהָרַב belongs to

the following עַם רַב. As the early morning dawns upon the mountains, so this “people” comes. “This,” says Keil, “is to be understood of the shining caused by the reflected rays of the sun from the wings of a swarm of locusts.”

[Some, says Dr. Pusey, have thought that there is here an allusion to the appearance which, the inhabitants of Abyssinia well know, precedes the swarm of locusts. A sombre yellow light is cast upon the ground from the reflection, it is thought, of their yellow wings. But that appearance seems to be peculiar to that country. — F.] The image naturally exhibits the suddenness and universality of the darkness, when men looked for light. As to the meaning of יִזְהָר, expositors are greatly divided. Bauer thinks that the points of comparison are the quickness with which, and the wide extent over which the dawn spreads itself. Credner's view is, that as the morning light overspreading the hills is a symbol and pledge of life and joy, so these clouds shall come overspreading the land with darkness and misery. [Wünsche takes it in the sense of the “morning gray,” *i. e.*, the time when the morning is wrapped in a sort of darkish or dusky gray; the meaning being, that the nature of this “day” will be made known just as the gray dawn of morning proclaims the coming day. — F.] There hath not been ever the like. The phrase seems to have been borrowed from Exod. x. 14, — a passage on which the prophet, in a general way, seems to have had his eye, — where the same thing is said of the plague of locusts sent upon Egypt.

Ver. 3. A fire devoureth. This description is based on what had been already experienced, namely, that the desolation caused by locusts had been attended usually by drought and terrible heat. But now the heat grows into a fierce flame, analogous to the awful displays when God revealed Himself at Sinai. So here, the army of locusts is God's host. כִּלְיֹתָהּ. That which has “escaped,” namely, the “fire,” or the desolation caused by it, has not remained in the land. [This

is a strained sense. The exposition of Newcome, Pusey, and Wünsche is more natural and sensible. "There is nothing that has escaped it, *i. e.*, this army." Pusey adds, "the word being used elsewhere of the *persons* who escape, — captivity or captives, — suggests in itself that we should not linger by the type of the locusts only, but think of enemies more terrible, who destroy men. — F.]

Vers. 4, 5. Their appearance — in battle array. The entrance of this fearful host is described. The head of the locust has a certain resemblance to that of the horse. Their celerity of movement is compared to that of horsemen; and in ver. 5, the noise caused by their leaping is likened to that made by chariots on rough mountain roads, so that their appearance is somewhat similar to that of an army advancing in battle array. Their noise in devouring plants and herbs is also compared to the crackling of flames in a field of stubble. [Pusey: The amazing noise of the flight of locusts is likened by those who have heard them, to all sorts of deep sharp rushing sounds. The prophet combines purposely things incompatible, the terrible heavy bounding of the scythed chariot, and the light speed with which these countless hosts should in their flight bound over the tops of the mountains where God had made no paths for man. — F.]

Ver. 6. Before them the peoples, etc. אֲמֵצִים here has the usual sense of "peoples," "nations," since the day of the Lord would not be confined to one country. All faces lose their glowing color, *i. e.*, the blood retires from the cheeks, so that they grow pale. אֲפֵי־אֲדָמָה is here to be taken in the sense of אֲפֵי־אֲדָמָה in ver. 10 and iii. 15.

Ver. 7. They shall run, etc. With resistless power they advance and march toward their goal. They run to attack. In like manner they climb the wall. אֲפֵי־אֲדָמָה = to change or shift the way, *i. e.*, to turn from one's way and go into that of another, so that the latter is hindered. [Pusey: They are on God's message and they linger not. Men can mount a wall few at a time; the locusts scale it much more steadily, compactly, irresistibly. The picture unites the countless multitude, condensed march, and entire security of the locusts with the might of warriors. — F.]

Vers. 8-10. And no one shall press, etc. Those behind shall not press upon those before. No weapons can stop the advance of this host; or arrest its march. They rush through, or between, or under the darts, or swords. They go forward as if no obstacles were in their way. Of course this does not mean that any attempt was actually made to oppose their progress, but simply that it would be vain to resist them, by the means ordinarily used to arrest an army (ver. 9), comp. Ex. x. 6. The picture in vers. 7-9 is perfectly true to nature. Jerome (*in loc.*) says, "We have ourselves lately seen this very thing in this province (Palestine). When the locusts come and fill the whole space between earth and sky, they fly in perfect order, as if obedient to a divine command, so that they look like the squares of a pavement. Each one holds its own place, not diverging from it even so much as by a finger's breadth. To these locusts nothing is impenetrable, fields, meadows, trees, cities, houses, even their most secret chambers." The accounts of more recent observers agree with this description. There is a design in this picture so elaborate in its details. The more terrible the visitation of locusts appears, the more certain would it be, that when the day of the Lord

came, this host would become God's instrument in the infliction of his judgment. What follows in ver. 10 is fully consonant with the fact, though there is some rhetorical amplification, as the prophet, once for all, sees in the swarm of locusts not a mere natural phenomenon, but an evidence of the coming of the day of the Lord. The view we take of an event naturally gives a certain coloring to the picture of it, and a certain climactic amplification is proper, when the event is one that surpasses all previous experience. Before them, or it, *i. e.*, this great and mighty people. The earth trembles. What more natural than that heaven and earth should be terrified by such a host, — one so dreadful in fact, so much more dreadful when viewed as the host of an avenging God? This most awful effect cannot, indeed, be seen or heard, like these marching hosts and the noise they produce; it can only be felt, and thus all the wider scope is given to the terrified imagination. The obscuration of the sun, moon, and stars is real, but this darkness becomes more fearfully impressive, since the locust swarms appear as a tempest cloud of divine wrath. (Comp. Jer. xiii. 10; Ezek. xii. 7; Mark xiii. 24.)

Ver. 11. And Jehovah shall utter his voice. Probably a real event is referred to, — a thunder-storm in connection with the coming of the locusts. The prophet hears the thunder not so much with his outward ear as mentally, recognizing it as a manifestation of God. Only such displays of power as those described in vers. 10, 11, would benefit the greatness of the host sent to do Jehovah's will, and the terribleness of the day of the Lord that was coming, — a day so terrible as to wring from the prophet the inquiry, "who can endure it?" See Jer. x. 10; Mal. iii. 1.

Vers. 12-17. Yet even now, etc. Though the anger of God is so clearly revealed that men may see his day coming, yet He says, Turn unto me, and thus points out the way in which his anger may be averted. If they repented, they would escape these judgments, and find God gracious With all your heart. This is the most essential thing, and so is named first, yet this hearty repentance will also manifest itself outwardly. But the prophet warns the people that a merely external repentance will effect nothing (ver. 13), comp. Ps. li. 19; Ezek. xxxvi. 26. Such repentance, however, as that described in vers. 12, 13, will avail, because "He is gracious" (Ex. xxxiv. 6; 2 Sam. xxiv. 16). Therefore is there hope that He will avert his judgments. Who knoweth. That God is such as He is here described is beyond a doubt, but whether, under present circumstances, He will display his mercy, is not so certain. This depends on the conduct of the people, and hence the prophet would have them to bear in mind, that pardon would not come to them as a matter of course, and that their repentance must not be of an easy and formal kind. He will return. Jehovah is conceived of as on his way from heaven for the purpose of judgment; but He may stop, and return to heaven. Leave behind Him, *i. e.*, when He returns to heaven (Hos. v. 5) A blessing, *i. e.*, an abundant harvest, so that there may be no lack of those offerings, the materials of which had been destroyed by the locusts (l. 9-13). Instead of a day of judgment (involving a greater desolation than any as yet experienced), there was hope that God would give another crop to replace the one destroyed (ver. 5). Since repentance opened such prospects of blessing, the priests should summon the people to meet for the

purpose of humiliation and prayer, and they should themselves, in the name of the people, implore God's mercy.

Ver. 16 repeats what was said before in i. 14, but more in detail. Sanctify a congregation, *i. e.*, call a meeting of the congregation for sacred purposes. No age should be excepted, because the entire people deserved punishment and needed to repent. Even the joy of the bridegroom and the bride must give place to penitential mourning. What the priests should do, when the people were assembled, is defined in ver. 17. They shall stand between the porch and the altar, *i. e.*, immediately before the entrance to the sanctuary and turning toward it, they should pray to God, appealing to Him in behalf of the people as his own covenant people.

[Pusey: The porch in this, Solomon's temple, was in fact a tower in front of the Holy of holies, of the same breadth with the temple. The brazen altar for burnt-offerings stood in front of it. The space between the porch and the altar, became an inner part of the court of the priests. It seems to have been a place of prayer for priests. It is spoken of as an aggravation of the sins of those twenty-five idolatrous priests, that here, where they ought to worship God, they turned their backs toward the temple of the Lord to worship the sun. Here Zechariah was standing, when the spirit of God came upon him, and he rebuked the people, and they stoned him. — F.]

#### THEOLOGICAL.

1. The day of the Lord (i. 15; ii. 1; iii. 4-14), is a phrase used only by the prophets. If, as some think, Obadiah is the oldest, the phrase occurs first in Ob. 15, and next in the above marked places in Joel. If this view of the relative ages of these prophets be correct, we may assume that the phrase was introduced into prophetic language by Obadiah. Certainly Joel uses it in a way to show that he regarded the idea expressed by it as one well known to those for whom he prophesied, though, as Ewald suggests, the expression may be here presented in its oldest and simplest form. "As the king of a vast empire, — Ewald adds, — may for a time so completely disappear from the view of his subjects, as to be the same as if he had ceased to exist, and then suddenly reappear among them, in the fullness of his power to hold a long delayed assize, so the Invisible One may put off, or seem to put off the day when He will appear as the Supreme Judge. The idea of the "day of the Lord" is closely connected with that of Jehovah as king, who as such has a "day" for men, — a day in the pregnant sense of the word, a day for judgment. Jehovah as king must and will, in due time, suddenly and miraculously judge and subdue all who are in rebellion against Him. He will subject all things to his own holy and righteous control, thus showing that his will is the only and absolute rule; and will rectify all that is now disorderly in the condition of things on the earth. As Israel was then the kingdom of Jehovah in a special sense, "the day" for Israel as God's people, would be the epoch of their perfect and glorious deliverance from all their enemies. This appears in ch. iii. The "day" is that one on which Jehovah sits in judgment on all his foes, and when Israel's prosperity begins. Yet it is even for Israel a day of judgment, — one that shall make it manifest whether they are faithful or not

to their obligations as God's people. If not, even they shall be destroyed, unless timely repentance intervenes. This view is presented in chaps. i.-ii. Thus while the ultimate result of the judgment will be the salvation and glory of Israel, the immediate design of the day of the Lord is the punishment of the heathen as the enemies of his people, and of the latter as well if untrue to their covenant relation. Hence all the predicates that describe the day, mark it as one of judgment. It is "great and very terrible" (ii. 11; iii. 4); "dark and gloomy" (ii. 2; Amos v. 18; Is. ii. 12). In the announcement of this "day," Israel is not so much consoled, as warned against self-conceit and security, — a warning all the more earnest on account of the uncertainty of its coming. Hence men should be always ready for it. Still, Joel does not as yet seem to know how far the kingdoms of Israel and of Judah may be faithless to their calling as God's people, nor what divine judgment shall overtake them. He sees them, on the one hand, menaced by judgments, but on the other hand, by their penitence averting them, so that actually these judgments in their destructive power fall upon the heathen alone, while Israel and Judah are redeemed and glorified. The יוֹם ה' is the *ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου* of the New Testament. Joel, however, does not use the phrase "day of the Lord" with reference to the hope of Messiah's coming, since we find no such hope in any part of his prophecy.

2. The next question is this, — Considering the "day of the Lord" as one of menace to Israel, how was it regarded by the prophet himself? We begin by saying that the "day," as viewed by Joel, was not marked by a series of events, but by a single, sudden, and conclusive act. And therefore Keil applies modern speculative notions to the exposition of the phrase, when he says, "each particular judgment by which God chastises his own people for their sins, or destroys the enemies of his kingdom, may be regarded as a *moment* in the 'day of the Lord.'" If so, why should Joel connect the approach of that day with the visitation of locusts? As already mentioned in ch. i. the allegoric signification assigned by some to the locusts (*i. e.*, hostile hosts), has arisen out of the union of two heterogeneous things. This allegoric sense may be found in those other prophets, one of whose chief themes was the judgment to be inflicted upon Israel by means of heathen nations — a judgment which then appears as "the day of the Lord" for Israel. But the verbal text will not admit of this principle of interpretation in ch. i. The objection, however, does not hold in ch. ii., where the prophet describes the entrance of swarms of locusts into the land as an actual event, and also designates it as the coming of the day of the Lord. Some interpreters take the locust visitation as a presage and a symbol of an invasion by hosts of a different kind, partly on the ground that it is denoted as the coming of the day of the Lord, and partly from the use of the term "northern" in ver. 20, which cannot be applied to the locusts. There is, however, not much force in the first of these considerations, for while there is, in a general way, an obvious analogy between the swarms of locusts and an invading army, much is here said about the one that will not apply to the other. The reference to Is. xiii. is more to the purpose, for he quotes the very words of Joel, and describes the judgment of Babel in terms that show that he understood the locust invasion in an allegoric sense. But though

the language of the two prophets is so similar, it does not follow that they refer to the same events, nor that their words are to be understood in precisely the same sense.

But there are positive difficulties in the way of the allegoric interpretation of this chapter. For example, what can be meant by "driving the locusts into the sea" (ii. 20)? Again, the question arises, if Israel is threatened by an enemy, by what one? The word "northern" proves nothing. It is strange, on this theory, that while Joel describes the judgment on Israel by some foe, he gives us no hint even by which to identify him. There is no indication that the heathen nations were to be the chosen instruments for this purpose. On the contrary, what they do against Israel is exhibited as a crime which shall bring down God's judgments on their own head. This method of exposition also overlooks the differences in the times when the several prophets lived. In Joel's days, the great empires had not yet appeared as the special instruments of God's judgments on his covenant people. In this character they had not yet come within the range of the prophet's vision. He knew, indeed, that Israel's sins deserved, and would receive chastisement, but he had not yet been told that the heathen nations would be God's agents in inflicting it. Whenever they are named, it is as being themselves the objects of wrath, while Israel appears as a penitent and the recipient of God's mercy.

But it may be said that while the prophet describes a real locust visitation, he sees in it, at least to a certain extent, a type of the "day of the Lord" — a day of judgment; or in other words, what the land had already experienced might warn its inhabitants that they would have a still more bitter experience when that "day" arrived. But the difficulty is that if we suppose one event to be in any sense formally typical of the other, we find in the minutely detailed account of the type much that in no way corresponds with the antitype. The darkness, the terror, and the desolation produced by the locusts might be in themselves typical, but these are the features on which the least emphasis is laid by the prophet.

The view which we prefer is this. The land had been desolated by locusts to an unparalleled extent. The prophet had reason to fear that this was the harbinger of a worse calamity of the same sort. He sees in the visitation the beginning of the day of the Lord. The locust army is led by God himself, and hence the lively colors of that picture of it which he draws. The plague of locusts and the day of the Lord are not to be taken as two distinct things. They differ, not like the type and the antitype, but as the beginning and the end of the same thing. And so he says, "the day of the Lord cometh, it is near." He sees its approach, still he hopes that the repentance of the people in answer to his earnest appeals, will ward off its further effects, — that Israel, warned and taught by the earlier and merely relative judgment, may escape the final one, and that the enemies of God's people alone shall be overwhelmed by it. The day of the Lord in the highest sense of the words, did not, indeed, come with the calamity by which Israel was then chastised, but each preliminary judgment was really the precursor and pledge of the absolute and final one. All that we can affirm is that the prophet saw in this locust visitation not merely a natural phenomenon, but the finger of God. In these terrible scenes he hears the voice of the Living God call-

ing his people to repentance. As God's messenger he reëchoes the earnest appeal, knowing that ere long He will come to judge his people, though the exact time of his coming none can tell.

3. The plague of locusts was a punishment of the nation's sins. The prophet, therefore, demands hearty repentance, and a return to God. He, however, does not name the sins which had brought down this chastisement. There seems to have been no one prevalent form of corruption at that time, and, in particular, there is no distinct trace of idolatry. But this shows how earnest God is in punishing sin, since not only do gross iniquities awaken his displeasure, but also sins of the heart, though there may be no outward display of them. His love to his people also appears, since He summons them to repentance, in circumstances, in which, without such a call, they might have sunk into a condition of dangerous security. The earnestness of the prophet is also shown by his recognizing these calamities as divine judgments for sin, and his evident belief that although the people might outwardly seem to be in the right way, they might really be at the same time ripe for punishment. The repentance he demands, should consist essentially of turning with the whole heart to God, and which would outwardly manifest itself by fasting, weeping, and rending the garments. These were expressive symbols, and on this very account there was danger of putting them in the place of the inward feelings which they implied and represented. Against this mistake he warns the people, "rend your hearts and not your garments." But even their sorrow for sin, however real, would be of no avail without an actual turning to God. The repentance which He demands, is such as both has its seat in the heart, and displays itself in the life. Prayer for pardon is a prominent feature of the public solemn humiliation described in ver. 17. As the whole land had been already chastised, and was still threatened with a severer infliction, the repentance suited to the occasion was not simply that of individuals, but of the whole nation as such. Of course, this national penitence has its root in that of individual men, but it does not rest there. As Israel had only one legal sanctuary — the Temple, — all public religious ceremonies must take place there, and through the ministry of the one priesthood. The public fast-day demanded by the Prophet is a Biblical precedent for the observance of similar days in Christian times and lands. They are as proper under the New Economy as they were under the Old. In this penitential prayer, there is not only an appeal to God's mercy, but a declaration that his honor is concerned in the continued existence of Israel as his people. To abandon Israel wholly would give occasion to the heathen to blaspheme, as if God had been unable to save his people, or had forgotten his promises to do so. This relation, and these promises were not designed, nor did they really tend to beget a sinful security, but to keep alive in the hearts of God's people an humble faith and hope. Israel bows under God's hand, but at the same time trusts Him as his God. This relation of ancient Israel is repeated, but in a far higher form and degree in the sonship of God's people under the New Covenant.

Repentance is necessary. It alone can help, yet the punitive justice of God has also its influence for good. For while it is certain that the righteous Lord will punish sin, his grace, and pity, and patience are no less certain. And so if there be

no defect in the repentance of the sinner, forgiveness will not be wanting on the part of God. This truth is most emphatically expressed in ver. 18, where a rich promise immediately follows a severe menace. Yet the observation of Reiger is a very just one, namely, that the true penitent must and will leave wholly in God's hand the mitigation of the temporal punishment which he may have brought upon himself on account of his sins.

#### HOMILETICAL.

Ver. 1. *Blow the trumpet.* It is the office of a minister of God's Word, when great calamities are imminent, to sound an alarm, and call men to repentance. *The day of the Lord,* etc. All the remarkable judgments with which God visits individuals, or a land, are harbingers of the final judgment of the world, and whatever there is of the terrible in the former, will be found in the latter, in a far higher degree, by godless sinners. How stupid the security of those who, in the face of such events, with ruin impending over their heads, are not disturbed even for a moment. The day of the Lord cometh. (1) Nothing is more certain than the fact of its coming. (2) But nothing is more uncertain than the time of its coming. The call to prepare for it should be continually sounding. It does not come so quickly, perhaps, as we in our impatience often wish, but it will come more quickly than the secure imagine. Its delay is not designed to beget wantonness in men, but only shows — as we should gratefully own — the long suffering of the Lord, who desires not that any should perish; God warns men often, and for a long time, but at last the decision will come. We should not be hasty in predicting when the day of the Lord will come, but we should be reminded of it in all the visitations of his providence, and we should try to put ourselves in the light of that day. As the special divine judgment will find their completest accomplishment in that last great day of wrath, they are so described as to fill men's minds with a wholesome terror, and to convince them how utterly unable they shall be to endure it.

[PUSEY: Ver. 1. The trumpet was wont to sound in Zion only for religious uses: to call together the congregations for holy meetings, to usher in the beginnings of their months, and their solemn days with festival gladness. Now, in Zion itself, the stronghold of the kingdom, the holy city, the place which God chose to put his Name there, which He had promised to establish, the trumpet was to be used only for sounds of alarm and fear. Alarm could not penetrate there, without having pervaded the whole land. Good is the trouble which shaketh carnal peace, vain security, and the rest of bodily delight, when men, weighing their sins, are shaken with fear and trembling, and repent. — F.]

Ver. 2. *A day of darkness.* A day of judgment is a manifestation of God's wrath against sin, after the measure of his grace which seeks to save and bless them has been exhausted. Hence darkness is its proper symbol.

[HENRY: Extraordinary judgments are rare things and seldom happen, which is an instance of God's patience. Let none be proud of the beauty of their grounds any more than of their bodies, for God can soon change the face of both. — F.]

Ver. 6. *The people tremble.* An ever-growing

dread will accompany and enhance the terrors of approaching judgment. Men in their wanton security are all the while preparing the material of such fear.

[HENRY: When God frowns upon men, the lights of heaven will be small joy to them. For, man by rebelling against his Creator, has forfeited the benefit of all his creatures. None can escape the arrests of God's wrath, can make head against the force of it, or bear up under the weight of it.

PUSEY: The judgments of God hold on their course, each going straight to that person for whom God, in the awful wisdom of his justice, ordains it. No one judgment or chastisement comes by chance. Each is directed and adapted, weighed and measured, by infinite wisdom, and reaches just that soul for which God appointed it, and no other, and strikes upon it with just that force which God ordains it. — F.]

Ver. 11. *Very great is his army.* God can use any creature as his instrument to do his work. How many and mighty the hosts which He can send against men! The smallest things can become his agents to produce the greatest results. The mightiness of God, and the weakness of men, are here most distinctly displayed. *Who can endure?* No one who does not turn in penitence to God. This is a most momentous question, which we should often and seriously ponder. O what a creature is man! How proud when trouble is at a distance! How powerless and despairing when it overtakes him!

Ver. 12. *Yet also even now,* etc. These words introduce the exhortation to repentance, to guard the people against the notion, that, when the prophet called on them to repent, and assured them that they would escape punishment if they did so, he was speaking in a sort of formal way, and in his own name. Both the exhortation and the promise come from God. When repentance enters, then comes help and hope. Repentance alone can ward off divine judgments. It is not enough that repentance be strong in its outward manifestations, as fasting and weeping, it must also be deep-seated, hearty, and not superficial. *Turn unto the Lord.* A call that is both needful and salutary, though, alas, too often unheeded. Grief for sin is only the half of repentance, it must be accompanied by a real turning to God. Only thus, O man, shalt thou obtain pardon; only thus will there be an actual turning away from sin. Sinner! despair not on account of thy misdeeds. Is God's wrath against sin very great? His grace in pardoning it is greater still. So rich is the grace of God that the prophet is at a loss for words adequately to describe it. How ready God is to repent Him of the evil! Make a trial of his readiness and see. He who does not seek God's grace as a penitent will never know how great it is. How much more willing is God to leave behind Him a blessing rather than a curse. No one would ever truly repent unless grace planted in the heart the seeds of faith and hope. Though a gracious hope grows slowly, yet the wavering heart will often be, in a secret way, sustained by it, and such a soul will better apprehend it than one filled with overmuch confidence.

[JEREMY TAYLOR: Although all sorrow for sins hath not the same expression, nor the same degree of pungency and sensitive trouble, yet it is not a godly sorrow, unless it really produces these effects; i. e. (1), that it makes us really to hate, and (2) actually to decline sin; and (3) produces in us a fear of God's anger, a sense of the guilt of

his displeasure; (4) and then such consequent trouble as can consist with such apprehension of the Divine displeasure; which, if it express not in tears and hearty complaints, must be expressed in watchings and strivings against sin; in patiently bearing the rod of God; in confession of our sins; in perpetual begging of pardon; and in all the natural productions of these according to our temper and constitution; it must be a sorrow of the reasonable faculty, the greatest of its kind.

PUSEY: Although the mercy of God is in itself one and simple, yet is called *abundant*, on account of its divers effects. For God knows how in a thousand ways to succor his own. — F.]

Ver. 14. *A meat-offering*, etc. God's glory and our salvation are so intimately conjoined, that the pardon of the guilty is facilitated thereby, since the salvation of the sinner redounds to the glory of God.

[HENRY: Now observe: (1) The manner of the expectation is very humble and modest. *Who knows?* Some think it is expressed thus doubtfully to check the presumption of the people, and to quicken them to a holy carefulness. Or, rather, it is expressed doubtfully, because it is the removal of a temporal judgment that they here promise themselves, of which we cannot be so confident, as that God is gracious. (2) The matter of the expectation is very pious, they hope God will return and *leave a blessing behind Him*, not as if He were about to go from them, and they could be content with any blessing in lieu of his presence, but *behind Him, i. e.*, after He has ceased his controversy.

PUSEY: God has promised forgiveness of sins to those who turn to Him. But He has not promised, either to individuals or churches, that He will remit the temporal punishment which He had threatened. He forgave David his sin (against Uriah). But the temporal punishment of his sin pursued him even on the bed of death. God often visits the penitent soul, and by some sweetness with which the soul is bathed leaves a token of his renewed presence. — F.]

Vers. 15, 16. *Sanctify a fast* — *Gather the people*. Fasting is a refined external discipline, promotive of prayer and piety. Only we must take care not to make a merit of it. — *The people*. By penitence and prayer, an entire community may be saved from a great calamity. — *Children*. Parents should be aroused to a deeper sorrow for

their sins by the thought of their young children, who are also members of God's Church, and included in his covenant. As little children share in the calamities caused by the sins of their parents, their common distress should be presented before the Lord, and deliverance from it asked. — *The Bride*. In seasons of general distress and danger, we should abstain from the most innocent enjoyment.

[HENRY: It is good to bring little children, as soon as they are capable of understanding anything, to religious assemblies, that they may be trained up betimes in the way they should go. — Private joys must always give way to public sorrows, both those for affliction, and those for sin.

ROBINSON: It is very consolatory to observe, even in the midst of this terrific visitation — the last harbinger of the Saviour's coming — an invitation of mercy. If men will then but seek the Lord with their whole heart, in deep humiliation, and turn away from their sins, He will be inquired of. At the eleventh hour, when the time for work is all but gone, they may find admission into his vineyard. Happy is it when outward afflictions of any kind lead us to true repentance. — F.]

Ver. 17. *Let the Priests*. The special duty of the priesthood was to exhort the people to repentance, to stand between them and the Lord and pray for them, and hence it is the duty of every Christian, as a spiritual priest, to stir up his fellow Christians to repentance, and to pray for them. — *Spare Thy People*, — a petition full of humility and confidence, *i. e.*, "look upon our needs, but remember also thy glory, O Lord!" What we need is God's mercy. We can appeal to what his grace has made of us. There is the strongest antithesis between God's people and the heathen, just as there is between God and idols. — *Where is their God*. God will never abandon his people, — a truth full of comfort to them, though it affords no ground for carnal security. On the contrary, it is fitted to stimulate us to be faithful to Him, as He is faithful to us.

[HENRY: Ministers must themselves be affected with those things wherewith they desire to affect others. — The maintaining of the credit of the nation among its neighbors, is a blessing to be desired and prayed for, by all that wish well to it. But that reproach of the Church is especially to be dreaded and deprecated which reflects upon God. — F.]

## PART SECOND.

### THE PROMISE.

#### CHAPTERS II. 18-III. 21.

### SECTION I.

*Annihilation of the Locust Army. Reparation of the Damage done by it, by a Rich Blessing.*

#### CHAPTER II. 18-27

18 Then Jehovah will be jealous<sup>1</sup> for his land.  
And will pity his people.

- 19 And Jehovah will answer and say unto his people,  
Behold I will send<sup>2</sup> you the corn,<sup>3</sup>  
The new wine, and the oil ;  
And ye shall be satisfied<sup>4</sup> therewith,  
And I will no longer make you  
A reproach among the heathen.
- 20 And I will remove far from you the northern<sup>5</sup> *host*,  
And will drive him into a dry and desolate land ;  
His face (or his van) toward the east sea,  
His rear towards the west sea.  
And his stench shall arise,  
And his ill savor shall ascend,  
For He has done great things.<sup>6</sup>
- 21 Fear not, O Land,  
Be glad and rejoice,  
For Jehovah hath done great things.
- 22 Fear not, ye beasts of the field !<sup>7</sup>  
For the pastures of the wilderness have sprung up,  
The tree beareth her fruit,  
The fig tree and the vine yield their strength.<sup>8</sup>
- 23 O ye children of Zion rejoice and be glad  
In Jehovah your God ;  
For He gives you the former rain<sup>9</sup> in just measure,  
And sends you, in showers, the early and the latter rain, as aforetime.<sup>10</sup>
- 24 And the threshing floors shall be full of corn,  
And the vats shall overflow with wine and oil.
- 25 And I will restore<sup>11</sup> (or replace) the years<sup>12</sup>  
Which the locust, the cankerworm, the caterpillar and the palmerworm have devoured,  
My great army which I sent against you.
- 26 Then ye shall eat in plenty<sup>13</sup> and be satisfied,  
And shall praise the name of Jehovah your God,  
Who hath dealt wondrously with you.  
And my people shall never be ashamed.
- 27 And<sup>14</sup> ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel,  
And I Jehovah am your God, and none else.  
And my people shall never be ashamed.

## CRITICAL AND TEXTUAL.

- 1 Ver. 18. — *הַנָּבִיא* with *ל* or *ב* = to be jealous for some one out of love.
- 2 Ver. 19. — *אֲשַׁלַּח*, more lit., "am sending."
- 3 Ver. 19. — *הַדֶּבֶר*: the article is used to give prominence to the products which the Lord promises to send.
- 4 Ver. 19. — *אֲשַׁבְּעֵתֶם אֹתִי*. The sing. *אֹתִי* is here used collectively.
- 5 Ver. 20. — "Northern." Schmoller insists that *הַצְּפוֹנִי* should be rendered "destroyer." See Exeget. note on his ver.
- 6 Ver. 20. — *הַגְּדִיל לַעֲשׂוֹת*, lit., "he has magnified to do." Schmoller renders it: "*er hat grossgethan*." The same phrase occurs in ver. 21, which shows that it cannot be taken in the sense of boasting. It is synonymous with the *מִקְלָא לַעֲשׂוֹת* (Judg. xiii. 19), and *עָשָׂה לְהַפְלִיא*, il. 26.
- 7 Ver. 22. — "*Fiel*." *אֲנִי* is not the plur. for *אֲנִי* but the sing. = *אֲנִי*, according to the analogy of *אֲנִי*.

8 Ver. 22. — **נָתַן הָיִל**, "give strength," like the Lat. *edere fructum*. The metaphor is one in which the cause is put for the effect. Only used here and in Ps. i. 4.

9 Ver. 23. — **הַמְּוֹרָה**, "the early rain," from **וָרָה**, *fecit*, perhaps because its season was *post factam sementem*. Kell renders it "a teacher for righteousness." But the word when so used is followed by **ב**, more rarely by **ל**, or **יָן**. Ewald and Umbreit take **וָרָה** in the sense of "early rain," but render the phrase "rain for righteousness," *i. e.*, as a sign of their being again received into the divine righteousness. But this is a strained sense; better, "according to right," *i. e.*, in just measure, as the ground requires.

10 Ver. 23. — "*Aforetime*," **קִרְיָאוֹן**. There seems to be an omission of **כ**. The Sept. render it *καθώς ἐμπροσθεν*; the Syr., *ut antea*; the Vulg., *sicut in principio*. The Chald. and Arab. have the reading "as in the month Nisan."

11 Ver. 25. — The primary meaning of **שָׁלַם** is "to be whole," but it is here used in the sense of "replace, or make good."

12 Ver. 25. — "*Years*," **שָׁנִים** the plur. form used, perhaps, only in a poetic sense, as in Gen. xxi. 7; Ps. xlv. 9, 10; 1 Sam. xvii. 43.

13 Ver. 26. — "*Eat in plenty*," lit., "eat an eating, or eat to eat," etc. Wünsche renders it: "*Und ihr werdet essen, essen und satt werden*." The Heb. often has the infin. absol. as the object complement of the finite verb, which sometimes follows and sometimes precedes it.

14 Ver. 27. — The **ו** here indicates the logical consequence from what precedes.

EXEGETICAL.

The second part of this chapter is wholly occupied with promises to Judah. The first part, which is so full of menaces, had also revealed God's mercy in case of repentance, but only in a general way, affording only a glimmering of hope. Now, however, the promises given by Jehovah Himself flow forth like a full, broad stream. This transition occurs suddenly in ver. 18. The promise, which takes the form of an answer of God, is grounded upon a seeming change in the Divine purpose. A declaration so positive as this, introduced by the imper. consec., as an actual fact, of course implies that the condition on which the change in the Divine purpose was based, had been fulfilled, *i. e.*, that the day of fasting and prayer had been duly observed, and that the promise is God's answer to his people's penitential prayer. Our book, therefore, is in point of time divided into two parts, an earlier and a later one.

Ver. 18. Then will the Lord, etc. **קָנָא** with **ל** = to be jealous for some one, *i. e.*, to be zealous for his welfare out of love for him.

Vers. 19, 20. Renewed fertility is promised by the removal of the cause of the desolation. Behold I send you. This carries us back to ch. i. 10, 11. **שָׁלַח**; because the growth of grain depends upon the fertilizing rain.

Ver. 20. **הַצְּפוֹנִי**, not the northern of the E. V. and other versions, for the locusts never invade Palestine from the North, but the destroyer. The word comes from **צָפוֹן**, the name of the well-known Egyptian god Typhon, from whence also comes the *δ τυφονικός* (Acts xxvii. 14). [This is a fanciful and groundless rendering. The word occurs in one hundred and fifty other places in O. T., and in all of them its sense is clearly that given to it here by our E. V. The term **הַצְּפוֹנִי**, says Wünsche, according to the Masor. punctuation, can have no other sense than that of "northern," or "northerner." The allegorists use the word as a proof of their theory, that the Chaldeans, or Syrians are meant. But there is not, either in what precedes or in what follows, the slightest trace of a hostile invasion of Judah by either of these nations. The word, therefore, must refer to the locusts. Nor is the designation of them as "northern" an arbitrary one, since their

movements were wholly dependent on the wind. — F.] Into a land dry and desolate, one in which this army will find nothing to destroy, but will itself perish. The land referred to is the desert of Arabia, on the southern border of Judæa. The two ways in which the locusts would be destroyed are mentioned: they would be driven into the desert, and into the sea. Two seas are named, in which this army should perish, namely, the vanguard in the east or Dead Sea, the rear in the west or Mediterranean. We need not, however, suppose that the destruction of these two divisions of the locust army occurred at the same time.

[His stench. Jerome says of the locusts of Palestine, when the shores of both seas were filled with heaps of dead locusts which the waters had cast up, their stench and putrefaction were so noxious as to corrupt the air, so that a pestilence was produced among men and beasts. The same fact is attested by many modern travellers. — F.]

Vers. 21-23. Fear not, O Land. As in ch. i. the land and its inhabitants were called upon to mourn in view of coming judgments, so now they are called upon to rejoice over the destruction of the hosts that had laid waste the country. Here, the address is that of the prophet; while in ver. 25 the Lord himself speaks. The subject and object of the joy are stated (ver. 21) in a general way. The latter is described in the words: **Jehovah hath done great things**. The perfect tense is here used like the German present, to denote an action, which being absolutely certain is thought of and presented as one already accomplished. What is here said of God's doings is not to be limited to that special time or occasion, but expresses a universal truth.

Ver. 22. Even the beasts of the field should no longer be afraid of wanting their supplies of food. The picture of blessing which begins with verdant pastures, ends with trees laden with fruit.

Ver. 23. Men are called upon to rejoice. **Children of Zion** may be taken in a general sense for the inhabitants of Judah, since Zion represented Judah. The former or early rain. It fell after autumn, and seems to be so called from **וָרָה**, *fecit*, because its season was *post factam sementem*. It was the chief need after the devastation and drought, and hence is named with special emphasis. The latter rain fell about harvest, towards the end of April. Hence its name from **לְהַשִּׁיב**, *collegit* **וְהַשִּׁיב** corresponds to the **וְהַשִּׁיב** (iii. 1)

the material blessings first, then the spiritual. [Pusey: It may be, *at the first, i. e.*, as soon as ever it is needed, or in contrast to the more extensive gifts afterwards; or, *as at the first, i. e.*, all shall, upon their penitence, be restored as at the first. These lesser variations leave the sense of the whole the same, and all are supported by good authorities. It is still a reversal of the former sentence, that, whereas before the rivers of water were dried up, now the rains should come, each in his season. — F.] “The rain shall come down,” here specially opposed to the drought, but, perhaps also a symbol of blessing in general. [So far as this special act may be generalized, it may rather be said that it begets and keeps alive the consciousness that the Giver of all good is again in the midst of his people. — F.]

Vers. 24–27. **And the threshing floors, — my people shall never be ashamed.**

The effects of the rain are first briefly, and then more fully described. The years, *i. e.*, the product of the years which the locusts had devoured. The plural form of the word does not imply that the visitations of the locusts described in ch. i. were in successive years; it only means that the results of a single visitation would be felt for several years, and that as long a time would be required to repair the mischief done by the locusts. The names of the four kinds of locusts given in ch. i. are repeated here, only that the generic name **אַרְבֵּי** holds a prominent place.

Vers. 26, 27. A beautiful conclusion; it treats of the redemption of Israel from the heathen, and thereby of the vindication of God himself. This is the fundamental idea that repeatedly recurs. This conclusion forms the point of transition to the new and higher promises in ch. iii., which fully display the truth that “Jehovah is in the midst of Israel, that He is their God and none else,” and therefore that his people can never be put to shame. While this promise is in a negative form, it really includes much more than the literal sense of the words; it means that God’s people shall not only not be ashamed, but that they shall be glorified forever, and that all the powers of this world that have opposed them shall be utterly confounded.

#### THEOLOGICAL.

The greatness of the promise shows the power and importance of repentance, and the magnitude of God’s grace. It is a confirmation of what is said (ii. 12). The punishment God inflicts is converted into a blessing; his zeal against us is changed into zeal for us. God’s dispensing blessing is the proof that He is in the midst of Israel; that Jehovah and none else is their God. Jehovah is in the midst of Israel, the centre and source of spiritual life. It is solely through Him, that Israel is what he is. The proof that God dwells with Israel is his blessing him; for the very object of his communion with Israel, and the choice of him to be his people, is to bless him. In dispensing blessings, God manifests his name, his power, his bounty, and distinguishes Himself from all false gods, who being dead cannot do that; while Israel being thus blessed is distinguished from the heathen, standing far above them who have no such God. Hence, too, the punishments inflicted upon Israel are in strong contrast with those which overtake the heathen. If Israel is unfaithful so that his God disowns him, it is quite natural

that if he repents, he should regain the blessing the honor of God and of his people require this. Upon this fact, repentant Israel grounds his prayer for pardon, and the promise given corresponds to the prayer. When God sends blessings to his people, whom his judgments have brought to repentance, the right way is, to rejoice in and enjoy them, with humble gratitude indeed, but at the same time with the confession that they come wholly from Him. Then, the humiliation endured will have produced its proper fruits.

#### HOMILETICAL.

Ver. 18. *And Jehovah was jealous for his people.* Penitential and believing prayer secures a gracious answer; sometimes in the way of warding off the temporal evils with which God visits men. Before we call, God will answer, and while we are speaking, He will hear.

[HENRY: God will have an eye (1.) To his own honor, and the reputation of his covenant with Israel, by which He had conveyed to them that good land; now He will not suffer it to be despised or disparaged, but *will be jealous* for the land and its inhabitants, who had been praised as a *happy people*, and therefore must not lie open to reproach as a miserable people. (2.) To their distress. He will *pity his people*, and will restore them their former comforts.

PUSEY: Before, God seemed set upon their destruction. It was his great army which was ready to destroy them; He was at their head giving the word. Now, He is full of tender love for them, which resents injuries done to them, as done to Himself. — F.]

Ver. 19. *I will send — corn.* It is God who averts the failure of crops, and scarcity of food. These evils neither come nor cease by accident. God gives us our daily bread. He opens his hand, and we are satisfied with food.

Ver. 20. *I will remove the northern.* When God has alarmed his people and brought them to repentance, He often pours out his wrath upon those who were his instruments in the infliction of chastisement.

Ver. 21. *Fear not.* How kindly God can speak to the heart! How powerfully can He console! It is easy for Him to do great things.

[PUSEY: Before, they were bidden to tremble; now they are bidden *fear not*. The enemy had *done great things*; now, the cause of joy is, that God had *done great things*; the almightiness of God overwhelming and sweeping over the might put forth to destroy. — F.]

Ver. 23. *Rejoice in the Lord.* Joy in God is the right kind of joy. From Him comes every blessing. Yet how often do we receive joyfully enough the gift, without rejoicing in the Giver? Certainly he who does not know God, cannot rejoice in Him.

[SCOTT: The sons of Zion can never have so great a cause to fear, but they must still have a greater to “rejoice in the Lord.” He gives us all our comforts, and enables us to use them with thankful hearts. The wisdom, truth, and love of his dispensations toward us deserve our highest admiration; and He will never leave his people to be ashamed of their confidence in Him. — F.]

Ver. 25. *I will restore.* How great is the bounty of God! It seems as if He were anxious to repair some injury which his preceding judgments had caused.

Ver. 26. *Ye shall be satisfied.* What a blessed result of humiliation when our being satisfied and

praising the Lord become and remain so united in us, that we can never again misuse God's gifts to feed vain conceit, luxury, tyranny, but shall maintain unmoved fear, love, and trust in God.

[Pusey: It is of the punishment of God when men eat and are not satisfied; it is man's sin that they are satisfied and do not praise God, but the more forget Him. And so God's blessings become a curse to him. God promises to restore his gifts, and to give grace withal, that they should own and thank Him. — F.]

Ver. 27. *I am in the midst of Israel.* Blessed is the people in the midst of whom the Lord dwells.

Every fresh blessing should be a proof to us that God is in the midst of us. But we must be God's people, if we would hope to have Him dwelling in the midst of us. He is only in the midst of Israel. God's people can never be put to shame; therefore let us see that we belong to them.

[HENRY: We should labor to grow in our acquaintance with God by all providences, both merciful and afflictive. When God gives to his people plenty and peace, He thereby gives them to understand that He is pleased with their repentance, that He has pardoned their sins. — F.]

## SECTION II.

*Hereafter, on "the Day of the Lord," the Enemies of Israel shall be destroyed, while the Lord reigns in Zion guarding and blessing it.*

## CHAPTER II. 28-32.

[In the Hebrew text and in Schmoller, these verses form Chap. III., while Chap. III. of E. V. is numbered Chap. IV. We prefer to keep the order of the E. V. — F.]

The promise, which up to this point has reference to the present and the near future, now takes a higher and wider range. It brings into view the day of the Lord, the result of the coming of which shall be, on the one hand, the overthrow of the world-power, and on the other, the full blessedness of God's people, through his dwelling in the midst of them. Ch. ii. 28-32 may be regarded as the introduction to the closing chapter, which describes the fulfillment of the promise. The grand events, which are the harbingers of the coming of the day of the Lord, are described. Zion is pointed out as the only place of safety; but even amid the terrors of that day, God's people will have no reason to fear. The third chapter describes the judgments to be inflicted upon the enemies of God's people, while the latter shall receive the richest blessings from the Lord, who sits enthroned on Zion.

28 And it shall come to pass afterward,<sup>1</sup>

That I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,  
And your sons and daughters shall prophesy;  
Your old men shall dream dreams,  
Your young men shall see visions;

29 Even<sup>2</sup> upon the men servants and the maid servants,  
In those days, will I pour out my spirit.

30 And I will give signs<sup>3</sup> in heaven and on earth,  
Blood, and fire, and columns of smoke;

31 The sun shall be turned into darkness,  
And the moon into blood,  
Before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.

32 And it shall come to pass that whosoever calleth on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance,  
As Jehovah hath said;  
Even among the remnant<sup>4</sup> whom Jehovah shall call.

## CRITICAL AND TEXTUAL.

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 28. — "Afterward." אַחֲרָיוֹ is clearly identical with the formula used by the later prophets. בְּאַחֲרֵי הַיָּמִים, "the last days."

<sup>2</sup> Ver. 29. — "Even." The "also" of E. V. hardly expresses the emphasis of אֲפִלּוּ.

<sup>3</sup> Ver. 30. — "Signs." מוֹפְתֵי־אֵימָנוֹת denotes not "signs," but rather prodigies, miraculous signs of coming events.

<sup>4</sup> Ver 32 — "Remnant." פְּלִיטָה properly means "deliverance, escape." Here the abst. is used for the concrete. Schmoller and Wünsche render "the escaped."

## EXEGETICAL.

Ver. 28. **And it shall come to pass, etc.** What is here said of a general outpouring of the Spirit, while connected with the foregoing promise, holds out to Israel the prospect of a grander dispensation of divine grace and of richer blessings than those promised in the preceding chapter. God will manifest Himself in such a manner as He has never done before. But this outpouring of the Spirit is viewed by the prophet as connected with the great day of the Lord, and as a sign of its coming. But he thus views it only because he sees in that day, a day of judgment on Israel's enemies, and a day of salvation to Israel, through God's dwelling in Zion. If vers. 28, 29 be considered as containing a new promise, ver. 30 would begin a new subject, which would be contrary to the tenor of the prophet's discourse, as it is evident that these verses are closely connected.

Ver. 28. **Afterward, i. e.,** after what had been before announced in ver. 23; it is more indefinite than the last days, although, in general, the meaning is the same. Joel apparently imagines that the events which he here describes, will happen in no very distant future. **רָצַף**, to pour,

primarily refers to rain, or a heavy shower of rain; it here denotes the communicating of something from above, and in great abundance. This last idea is illustrated in the extent of the gift, — to "all flesh," and the nature of the gift, — the spirit of prophecy in various forms. **כָּל בְּרִיּוֹת אֲדָמָה**. In contrast with God, to whom the רִיחַ belongs, **κατ.**

**ἐξ.** man appears as רָצַף "flesh." This term designates man not simply as a being in want of this "Spirit," but also as one naturally fitted to receive it, just as the dry ground is fitted to receive the rain. — **All flesh.** How is this general expression to be understood? It is clear from what follows that there is no limitation of sex, age, or condition, and that not merely particular individuals, but that all are to share in this divine gift, — a fulfillment of the wish of Moses (Num. xi. 29). The connection and the train of thought require us to extend the "all" to mankind generally. — **Shall prophesy.** This is explained by "prophesying," "dreaming dreams," "seeing visions." In this enumeration the most important thing comes first, *i. e.*, the proper prophetic function or power. **נִבְּאָה** means, not simply to predict future events, but generally to announce the revelations of God. The whole people will be the vehicle through which these highest spiritual utterances will be made, and as all barriers will be then broken down, woman is named by the side of man. To this prophesying are conjoined, in a sort of secondary way, other modes of divine manifestation, "dreams," "visions." As there is to be no difference of sex, so there is to be none of age, in regard to the sharing of this spirit. Even those who would seem to be unfitted for it shall receive it — "old men and children." Why, it may be asked, shall "old men dream dreams?" Because they are better fitted for "dreams," just as young men, or children are for "visions," though the reverse of this would seem to be more natural. But the condition of things predicted by the prophet would be every way extraordinary. — And the servants. This is added as something very singular. **גַּם** "and even." Nay, something unheard

of shall then happen, namely, that slaves as well as freemen shall partake of this Spirit. In other words, this social distinction shall then be abolished. The Jewish interpreters could scarcely comprehend how this could be, and hence the Sept. make the servants and hand-maidens, "God's," **ἐπὶ τοὺς δούλους καὶ τὰς δούλας μου**; so too Acts ii. 16.

Ver. 30. **I will show wonders.** What shall be the form of these phenomena of nature? It is idle to try to answer the question. They are evidently such as had never before been seen, though they may somewhat resemble the plagues of Egypt. There will be "blood" and "fire," and "pillars of smoke." The color of blood appears in the moon; both sun and moon are obscured; and there are signs of a hiding of the face of God who rules in heaven, and consequently of his anger. These signs will be of a nature to awaken terror, and all the more, as the day approaches, for it would seem from vers. 28, 29, 30, that there will be hardly an interval between the sign and the day. Its menacing aspect becomes so much the more prominent inasmuch as God will then manifest Himself, not merely in a general way, but as bringing on a special crisis. The obscuration of the stars is often mentioned in connection with the day of judgment (Ezek. xxxiii. 7; Am. viii. 9; Matt. xxiv. 29; Mark xiii. 24; Luke. xxi. 25). **Before the day of the Lord come.** Hence these appearances are signs of the coming of this day. Its actual coming and its importance are set forth in ch. iii.; here it is described only in a general way. Ver. 32 goes on to state that for Zion it will bring neither judgment nor destruction. Here its tempest will cease. But there is, at the same time, an implied exhortation to comply with the condition of safety.

Ver. 32. **And it shall come to pass, — whom the Lord shall call.** To call on the name of Jehovah is to confess Him, to worship Him who has revealed, and is revealing Himself to Israel. **Whosoever, כָּל** with a special emphasis, to teach that the day of the Lord will not bring destruction to all, though it may have that look. There will be complete deliverance to those who call on the name of the Lord, and to none else. The reason is given, because in Mt. Zion is "deliverance." As Jehovah had said. This seems to point to some positive prophetic promise. This divine promise of safety to all who call on the name of the Lord, based on the promise concerning Zion and Jerusalem, shows how closely related were these two places. They are set forth as the place where the Lord dwelt in his sanctuary with his people, and where his name is known. The calling on the Lord is wholly confined to Zion and Jerusalem, though it would be of no avail to any one to be in Zion unless he called on the Lord. **Deliverance.** Many take this term in a concrete and collective sense, *i. e.*, "the delivered," but the other is the more natural interpretation. **The remnant, or "the escaped;"** there shall be among them those whom the Lord calls. **שְׁרִיר** is one who has escaped from the field of battle, or one who has been saved from the fate of most others, and so implying that the number is small. This "remnant" is evidently to be ad as a new class to those before mentioned as delivered by calling on the name of the Lord, the idea being that they had been overtaken by the calamity, and though delivered, their escape had been a very narrow one, and hence noticed as the result of the Lord's special and merciful call. Who are they? Not those

already in Zion and Jerusalem; but those who were called to come there, *i. e.*, not to these localities merely, but to communion with the God who calls and who is enthroned in Zion. This manifestly means that some of those who would be properly liable to the judgment, would escape it and share in the salvation promised to Zion. Who are they? Not the inhabitants of Judah living outside the walls of Jerusalem; — a sense of the words entirely too limited and local. Besides, Zion and Jerusalem must be taken as including all the inhabitants of Judah wherever resident. It may, perhaps, be inferred from ch. iii. that they are the Israelites scattered among the nations, whom the Lord promises (iii. 16) to bring again. Yet they can scarcely be described as the “remnant,” or the “escaped,” since their deliverance is the very object of the judgment which falls upon the heathen world. Why not understand by the “remnant,” the heathen? They are both far off, and liable to the judgment. It would still be true that while the heathen world in general will be the object of the judgment in the day of the Lord, some of them will escape through the mercy of Jehovah. This is certainly only a faint indication of the calling of the Gentiles. This last fact is not distinctly announced, the heathen as such not having been as yet named. There is a close resemblance between ver. 32 and Ob. 17, so that if the latter was the earlier prophet, we might suppose that his words had been modified by Joel. Obadiah says, “there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau,” in the day of the Lord. Joel also says, that this day shall be one of judgment to all outside of Zion, for all the heathen. But he does not mean that none of them shall escape, for he admits it to be possible that Jehovah might call some of them. Joel thus takes a step in advance of Obadiah, and indicates, though it may be obscurely, the work that should be done by later prophets.

[Pusey: Ver. 28. *All flesh* is the name for all mankind. The words *all flesh* are in the Pentateuch, and in one place in Daniel, used in a yet wider sense, of everything which has life; but, in no one case, in any narrower sense. It does not include every individual in the race, but it includes the whole race, and individuals throughout it, in every nation, sex, or condition, Jew or Gentile, Greek or Barbarian, *i. e.*, educated or uneducated, rich or poor, bond or free, male or female. On all was to be poured the Holy Spirit. — Ver. 29. St. Peter, in declaring that these words began to be fulfilled in the day of Pentecost, quotes them with two lesser differences: “I will pour out of my Spirit and upon *My* servants and *My* hand-maidens.” The words declare something in addition, but do not alter the meaning, and so St. Peter quotes them as they lay in the Greek, which, probably, was the language known by most of the mixed multitude to whom he spake. The words “*My Spirit*,” express the largeness and fullness of the gift. The words “*of my Spirit*,” express, in part, that He who is infinite cannot be contained by us who are finite. The words “*the servants*,” mark the outward condition. The words “*my servants*,” declare that there should be no difference between bond and free.

Ver. 32. *Call upon the name of the Lord*. To call on the name of the Lord is to worship Him as He is, depending upon Him. The name of the Lord expresses his true Being, that which He is. For the name rendered, The Lord, expresses that He is and that He alone is, the self-same the un-

changeable; the name rendered God is not the special name of God. — F.]

[Wiinsche: Ver. 28. *My Spirit*. The Spirit of God is the divine analogue of the spirit of man. It is the true life principle of men; the source of physical life in the world of nature, of spiritual life in the sphere of religion, of all goodness, truth, rectitude, and beauty. Whatever the human mind thinks, feels, wills, fashions, in regard to any one of these objects is, in one sense, an outflow of the Divine Spirit. The prayer that ascends to heaven from a devout heart, the self consecration, the holy enthusiasm which distinguished the prophets, and fitted them to proclaim to the people God’s judgment and his mercy, — all these are expressions and gifts of the Divine Spirit. *All flesh*. The word is used in Heb. to denote the totality of living being on earth, beasts and men (Gen. vi. 13; vii. 15, etc.); and then in a more limited sense, for the human race. The connection shows that, here, it is taken in the latter sense. Credner, however, gives it the wider meaning so as to include the irrational animals, and refers in confirmation of his view to the prediction of Isaiah xi. 6-9, concerning the “wolf and the lamb, the leopard and the kid,” etc. But this friendly union of wild and tame animals is not represented by the prophet as the result of men’s enlarged knowledge of God. Man alone is the image of God; he alone is a fit organ of the Divine Spirit; he alone has the capacity to receive the gift here described, which, therefore, cannot be extended to the lower forms of animal life.

Ver. 32. *As Jehovah hath said*. There is no reference here to a lost prophecy (Meier); nor to an older writing of Joel (Ewald); nor to Obadiah (Keil). The meaning simply is that Joel, the person speaking, had a divine revelation of the fact, that where God’s throne is, there his true worshippers shall also be. *Shall call*. The word has a pregnant sense, conveying the idea that the “deliverance” depends not on the worshippers of God alone, but also upon God himself. Only those whom the Lord calls or chooses, and who call upon or choose Him shall be saved. Most of the older and later expositors take “call” in a predestinative sense. The Chald. has *quos dominus destinat*. — F.]

#### THEOLOGICAL

1. From the very first the prophets point to a great decisive Hereafter. In their being able to do this lay their strength. Living in the present, their eyes were ever turned to the future, or rather the end, the consummation of all things. Hence the power of their exhortations and promises to their contemporaries. Their influence would have been very frail and feeble, if they had not had a firm faith in a future, when the salvation of God should be fully realized.

2. Outpouring of the Spirit of God upon all flesh. It is evident from the context that this “outpouring” would extend beyond the people of Israel. This was its field (ver. 27). Here God will reveal Himself; here in the day of the Lord the judgment will take place, here all nations shall be gathered. The whole of ch. iii. shows that the prophet considered the heathen world as the enemy of God’s people. He does not put the heathen on the same footing with Israel, but on the contrary he directs attention exclusively to the high position of Israel as God’s people. It presupposes

the conversion of the heathen, and their reception among God's people. As he nowhere predicts such a conversion, his promise of an outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh cannot here include the heathen; even if we refer the phrase "whom the Lord shall call," to a selection of the heathen, it is all the more evident that the "all flesh" cannot include them. For the calling of individual heathen could not have the same prominence that would belong to the out-pouring of the Spirit on the whole heathen world. Joel might have assumed that some called out of the heathen world would partake of the blessing given to Israel. To Israel the promise was of something not only great but new, namely, the impartation of the Spirit to persons of all ages and conditions. Pouring out as a symbol of this impartation was never before used to denote the gift of the Spirit. Thus far only individuals in particular localities had received it. The gift was, indeed, a necessary result of the covenant relation in which Jehovah stood to Israel, but hitherto his Spirit had come only on individuals, fitting them to become divine messengers. Such a limitation, however, did not accord with the true idea of God's people, which implies that they should all be partakers of his Spirit. This should be fully realized in the future. Every barrier shall be broken down, and the reception of this Spirit shall be limited neither by age, sex, nor condition. It would come in the form of prophetic dreams and visions, giving those who received it a deeper insight into divine things, and make them organs of divine revelation.

This promise, as given by the prophet, is twofold. On the one hand, it will thus be seen that Jehovah is in the midst of Israel. On the other hand, this general outpouring of the Spirit will be a preparatory warning of the coming of the day of the Lord. That day will be one of immediate and decisive manifestation of God, and its approach will be heralded by new and startling events fitted to excite in the minds of men eager expectation, and to rouse them to seek salvation before it was too late. These warnings may consist of extraordinary phenomena in the world of nature, or of similar phenomena in the sphere of mind. From the spirituality of the religion of Jehovah we might expect that occurrences of the latter class would predominate. Perhaps we may go farther and say that the object of these remarkable events, of this prophesying, of these dreams and visions, is the day of the Lord itself. It is clear that by this general outpouring of the Spirit the way would be prepared for such a result of the day of the Lord as must redound to the glory of Israel. Since Jehovah thus recognizes Israel as his people, by making them all individually organs of his revelation, He must, while blessing them, resist and punish their enemies. This double aspect of the day of the Lord, as one of judgment, and of redemption, is here very distinctly declared. The deliverance of individuals will not come to them as a matter of course. If they escape the terrors of that day, and share in the salvation of God's people, it can only be by their complying with the conditions on which it is secured.

When shall this promise of a general outpouring of the Spirit be fulfilled? From the phrase "after this," the prophet seems to have regarded it as connected with the promise given in the earlier part of the chapter. But it does not follow that we looked upon it as near at hand. The prophets often connect promises relating to the present, very closely with those pertaining to the far distant fu-

ture. In this respect Joel and the later prophets agree. The latter represent the gift of the Spirit in its fullness to the covenant people, as a prominent feature of the Messianic age, or of the New Covenant. Jer. xxxii. 15; lvi. 13; Ez. xxxvi. 26; Zech. xii. 10. Hence we should, perhaps, designate this prophecy as in a general way Messianic, though Joel does not speak directly of the Messiah, and we should look for its fulfillment after the advent of Messiah. Thus St. Peter (Acts ii. 17) saw its accomplishment in the miracle of Pentecost. He

expressly refers the **תְּהִי יְהוָה** — *ἐν ταῖς ἑσχάταις ἡμέραις*, to the Messianic age. He distinctly recognizes the Messiah as the mediator through whom this rich and general bestowment of the Spirit should come. Like the prophet, he understood the "all flesh," to mean, in the first instance, the covenant people, though he declares that the promise extended also to those who were "afar off." Joel only intimates that the latter will escape, but does not say, in so many words, that the Spirit will be given to them. Peter evidently regarded — as Joel did — this outpouring of the Spirit as a sign of the Day of the Lord, *i. e.*, in the New Testament sense of the term, as a day of Parousia, and so quotes vers. 28-32. As he saw one part of the prediction accomplished, he naturally looked for the fulfillment of the other. There can be no doubt that the Apostles, at least for a time, thought that the *Παρουσία*, or the Coming of the Lord, was nigh at hand, and such prophecies as the one before us, would tend to confirm them in that expectation. On the day of Pentecost, Peter saw the Spirit poured out, not indeed on "all flesh," even in the limited sense of all Israel, but he was sure that the promise of it embraced the whole covenant people, and so he opens to all the prospect of the gift, on condition of repentance.

But though the wonders of Pentecost were the first and literal fulfillment of this prophecy, they by no means exhausted its meaning. The only effect of the outpouring of the Spirit recognized by Joel, is the prophetic, and on this memorable day, it certainly appeared in an ecstatic form. But we need only to look into the Epistles of St. Paul to discover that the influence of the *πνεῦμα ἁγίου* which Christ gives is not exhausted by such results; on the contrary, the grandest effect of it is the regeneration of the whole man. This deeper, ethico-religious conception of the gift of the Spirit, founded on the declarations of the later prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, is certainly the New Testament one. Joel's idea of the close connection between the outpouring of the Spirit and "the day," is in one sense a mistaken one, since the "outpouring" came, but not the "day," yet in another view it is perfectly correct. The two are most nearly related. With Messiah have come the *ἑσχάται ἡμέραι*; and the gift of the Spirit is, and will continue to be, a sign of the Day of the Lord, a proof that God is in the midst of his people, and will give them the victory over all their enemies. — Finally, we must not overlook the limits of the field of the Spirit's operations as described by Hosea. He, indeed, considered Israel alone as God's people, and that on Israel alone would the Spirit be poured out. But as we know from the New Testament that Christ's disciples are not limited to Israel, neither are God's people, so we are sure that this outpouring of the Spirit is confined to them, *i. e.*, to the spiritual Israel, to all who, by faith, are made one with Christ. All such partakers of the Holy Ghost.

[In this somewhat prolix and verbose dissertation, the author confounds two quite distinct questions, namely, What is the real meaning of the prophecy — whom does it embrace, — and when and how will it be completely fulfilled? and How far did Joel comprehend the real purport of the prophetic promises, which he was inspired to utter? This last question it is impossible to answer, because Joel has left no explanation of his prediction. We have nothing but the prophecy itself. Therefore we have no means of determining whether he took the "all flesh," as meaning simply Israel, or in its wider sense. After all, the question is one of no practical importance. The grand inquiry is. What is the meaning of the prophecy? — F.]

WÜNSCHE: Credner is clearly wrong when he says that Peter made a false application of this prophecy. No man can deny that on the day of Pentecost, the prediction of Joel began to be accomplished. We say designedly, "began to be accomplished," for although the Christian Church has been growing in divine knowledge, and has been working for the common good of all sexes, ages, and classes, more than eighteen hundred years since that day, the prophecy is not yet fulfilled. There are predictions, which have found their fulfillment in particular historical events; and there are others which embrace the entire field of humanity, and Joel's belongs to this latter class. Its complete accomplishment will be the history of the kingdom of God on earth, down to the end of time. — F.]

3. Let us now consider what the prophet teaches in regard to the condition of deliverance, in this "terrible day of the Lord." It is not sharing in those extraordinary influences of the Spirit, whose results are involuntary, but "calling on the name of the Lord," a free act, which every one who pleases can perform. There is something to be done by each individual for himself, and all are exhorted to do it. Spiritual gifts do not necessarily involve spiritual regeneration. So we find to have been the case in New Testament history, with the miraculous *χαρισματα*, which at first predominated, but gradually disappeared, giving place to a more natural and tranquil, a purer and deeper spiritual life. The condition of deliverance is stated in ver. 32, and all are exhorted to fulfill it. External membership with the people of Israel will not, of itself, secure salvation; but the condition is one so simple and easy, so really within the power of every one, that the verse has more the aspect of a promise than an exhortation. There is no real need that any one should be afraid of the coming of the "terrible day." Its terrors may be escaped by simply calling on the Lord in Zion and Jerusalem, the place of worship. Therefore no one need ask, Where shall I find the Lord on whom I must call? for the Lord Himself has named the place of his abode.

This alone is necessary, "to call on the Lord." To do this, it is not absolutely requisite that one should belong to Israel. This is plainly taught by the words just quoted. Hence Paul bases upon them the equal rights of Jews and Gentiles? But does this exposition suit the context, in which the prophet so expressly connects the deliverance with Zion and Jerusalem? If we look carefully into the matter, we shall find that it does. Zion is the place where God has revealed Himself. Without such a revelation as that made in Zion, neither calling on the Lord, nor salvation, would have been possible. Zion then (not in the local sense) is the seat and centre of salvation; because here

God has manifested Himself. Paul knew that a Greek, simply as such, could not call upon the Lord, since he did not even know the Lord who had revealed Himself in Israel. Those who would call upon Him, as Paul teaches, must believe in Him, and this implies that He had been preached to them, and this was done by those who made known to the heathen the God who has manifested Himself in Zion. Paul denies that conformity to the Jewish law is a condition of salvation. All this shows the Apostle's deep insight into the real meaning of Scripture. His heart beat for those afar off; he feels, and discovers instinctively, that the barriers which had separated Jew and Gentile were broken down by the very prophetic word which made salvation dependent on one thing alone, a thing within the reach equally of the Gentile and the Jew. He evidently took the words "whosoever shall call," etc., in a sense large enough to embrace the whole Gentile world. On exegetical grounds, as we have seen, we are authorized though not compelled to give them this breadth of meaning. In the last clause of ver. 32 the phrase occurs, "whom the Lord shall call," and it conveys the idea that salvation is not a matter of right, but of grace alone. With regard to all who are afar off this divine call is the cause of deliverance. If they had not been thus called they must certainly have perished, so that they owe their escape solely to the gracious call of God. But it is at the same time clearly implied that this call becomes effective and saving only when the man himself turns to the Lord.

#### HOMILETICAL.

Ver. 28. *Afterward.* A prophetic word of profound meaning. When? The prophets themselves did not know. Yet these promises were, for the present, a light shining in a dark place. But what kings and prophets of old desired to see and saw not, we see, who live in the times of fulfillment. To us the *Afterward* has become *Now*. To many, it is only a *Once*, a *Formerly*. They forget that the fulfillment of these prophetic words never grows old, but has a perpetual *Now*, which it becomes us to comprehend and improve until the *Lord* comes. For as that *Afterward* has become a *Now*, in Him in whom all the promises are *yea* and *amen*, so He still points us to a more distant *Afterward*, when there will be nothing new in distinction from the old, except as sight is distinguished from faith, and the end from the beginning.

*I will pour out my Spirit.* True fellowship with God implies the participation of the Spirit of God. So long as this privilege is confined to individual communion with God, on the part of men, it must be simply an object of desire and hope, notwithstanding the means used to extend it. Blessed privilege of the New Covenant, that in Christ every one may receive the Spirit of God. All special privileges are done away; all separating walls are broken down. The lowest as well as the loftiest can now aspire to be taught by the Spirit of God, and so to become a co-worker with God. How wonderful the condescension and the grace of God! (See Gal. iii. 28.) How plain is it that the religion of the Old Testament, though itself far from attaining this end, foreshadowed it, and revealed the way to it.

[HENRY: God hath reserved some better things for us, the kingdom of grace, and the kingdom of

glory, and the happiness of true believers in both. We often read in the Old Testament of the Spirit of the Lord coming like drops, as it were, upon the judges and prophets whom God raised up for extraordinary services, but now, the Spirit shall be poured out plentifully, in a full stream.

**PUSEY:** God alone can be poured out into the soul, so as to possess it, enlighten it, teach, kindle, bend, move it as He wills, sanctify, satiate, fill it. The prophetic word circles round to that wherewith it began, the all-containing promise of the large outpouring of the Spirit of God; and that, upon those whom the carnal Jews at all times would least expect to receive it. It began with including the heathen; it instances individual gifts, and then it ends by resting on the slaves. The order of the words is significant. He begins *I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh*, and then in order to leave the mind resting on these same great words, He inverts the order and ends, *and upon the servants*, etc. It leaves the thoughts resting on the great words "*I will pour out my Spirit.*"

**ROBINSON:** A Christian even now, animated and influenced by the Holy Ghost is a wonderful being, as superior to the rest of mankind, as man is superior to the beasts of the field. But what will he be then? There have been mighty men amongst us, a Milton, a Boyle, a Newton in a former age, and some in the present, who, with the highest gifts of genius, have been endowed with eminent gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit; but who shall say in that future dispensation, to what heights of wisdom and knowledge and power man may be advanced? Every discovery in science, every progressive improvement, such as the present age has developed, are prophecies and earnest of that glorious time here promised. — F.]

Ver. 30. *Show wonders.* The New Covenant has brought salvation, but it also brings sifting judgments corresponding to the greatness of this salvation. The question now is, how men will deal with it; and most certain is it that God will remove everything opposed to Him and his kingdom. Hence, with the salvation in Christ, there was need of this last separating judgment. Great displays of God's grace and great judgments often go together, the latter preparing the way for the former. So was it in Jerusalem. Those who despised the kindly tongues of flame on the day of Pentecost, had blood, fire, and vapor of smoke as the symbols of destruction. So is it now. Those who quench the Spirit, despise prophecies, and give themselves up to the flesh and the world will find "that day" all the more terrible, and that their damnation slumbereth not. The best thing is to be always ready for that day of God. If we delay until it actually comes, it may be too late.

[HENRY: The judgments of God upon a sinful world, and the frequent destruction of wicked king-

doms by fire and sword, are prefaces to and pre-ages of the judgment of the world in the last day.

**PUSEY:** Each revelation of God prepares the way for another, until that last revelation of his love and of his wrath in the great day. — F.]

Ver. 32. *Whosoever calleth.* Happy they who are found watching and praying when the Lord comes. We may escape the judgment, therefore we should not despair. All that is necessary is believing prayer to God. For every one who confesses God, He will confess. But such escape we must earnestly seek for ourselves. The coming of Christ has two aspects; to the godless, it will be a day of condemnation and wrath: to believers, a day of redemption and refreshing. In *Zion* and *Jerusalem, i. e.*, in the God who is there revealed, is redemption. He who believes in Christ is in *Zion*, for he confesses Him as the God of *Zion*. To Him belongs the glory of our salvation. Examine thyself to see thy real condition. The ability to stand in the judgment will come, not from any outward excellence, nor even from gracious privileges or preëminence. *The remnant.* God desires not to destroy, but to save. Hence his constant and gracious call to all who are afar off, to come and be saved. Even the heathen, who belong not to his chosen people, can obtain salvation. Not indeed unless He calls them; but if He does call and they yield to it through his grace, they share in the gifts of his people. Art thou among the called ones of God? Hast thou heard his call? Thou mayest be called and yet perish at last. Many are called, few chosen. God calls all, but He, in turn, will be called upon in faith.

[HENRY: This is ground of comfort and hope to sinners, that whatever danger there is in their case, there is also deliverance for them, if it be not their own fault. And if we would share in this deliverance we must apply ourselves to the Gospel *Zion*, to God's *Jerusalem*. It is the *praying* remnant that shall be the *saved* remnant. And it will aggravate the ruin of those who perish, that they might have been saved on such easy terms. Those only shall be delivered in the great day that are now effectually called from sin to God, from self to Christ, from things below to things above.

**SCOTT:** The Gospel calls men in general to partake of its blessings, and of that salvation which is revealed and placed in the Church; and "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord" Jesus, as the Son of God and the Saviour of sinners, shall be delivered from the wrath to come. This is the happy case of that remnant of every age and people whom the Lord calls by his regenerating Spirit; all things shall work together for their good; they may look forward with comfort for the day, when nature shall expire in convulsions, assured that then their eternal redemption shall be perfected. — F.]

### SECTION III.

*The Day of the Lord brings full Salvation to Israel and the Destruction of his Enemies*

#### CHAPTER III.

1 For behold, in those days,<sup>1</sup> and at that time

When I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem :

- 2 That I will gather all the nations,  
And will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat ;  
And there will I deal with (or judge) them,<sup>2</sup> for my people, and my heritage,<sup>3</sup> Israel.  
Because they scattered them among the nations,<sup>4</sup>  
And divided my land.
- 3 And they cast lots for my people,  
They bartered a boy for a harlot,  
And sold a maiden for wine,<sup>5</sup> and drank it.
- 4 And, also, what have ye to do with me, Tyre and Sidon,  
And all the borders<sup>5</sup> of Philistia ?  
Would you retaliate<sup>7</sup> upon me,  
Or render me a recompense ?  
Soon and swiftly<sup>8</sup> will I bring your recompense on your own head.
- 5 Because ye have taken away *my* silver and my gold,  
And have brought into your temples my goodly desirable things,<sup>9</sup>
- 6 And ye have sold the sons of Judah and Jerusalem to the sons of Javan,  
That ye might remove them far away from their border:
- 7 Behold, I will raise<sup>10</sup> them up out of the place where ye have sold them,  
And will return your retaliation on your own head.
- 8 And I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hands of the sons of Judah,  
And they shall sell them to the Sabeans, to a distant nation,  
For Jehovah hath spoken it.
- 9 Proclaim this among the nations,  
Declare (sanctify) a war,  
Arouse the mighty ones,  
Let all the men of war draw near, come up.
- 10 Beat your mattocks<sup>11</sup> into swords,  
And your pruning-hooks into spears,  
Let the weak say, I am strong.
- 11 Hasten<sup>12</sup> and come,  
All ye nations round about, and assemble yourselves ;  
Then Jehovah shall bring down<sup>13</sup> thy mighty ones.
- 12 Let the nations arise and come up  
To the valley of Jehoshaphat,  
For there will I sit to judge all the nations round about.
- 13 Put in the sickle,<sup>14</sup>  
For the harvest is ripe ;  
Come, tread,  
For the wine-press is full,  
The vats overflow,  
For their wickedness is great.
- 14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision,  
For the day of Jehovah is near in the valley of decision.
- 15 The sun and the moon are darkened,  
And the stars withdraw their shining,
- 16 And<sup>15</sup> Jehovah will thunder out of Zion,  
And from Jerusalem he will give forth his voice,  
So that the heavens and the earth shall shake ;  
But Jehovah will be a refuge for his people,  
And a stronghold for the sons of Israel.

- 17 And ye shall know that I Jehovah am your God,  
Dwelling in Zion my holy mountain ;  
And Jerusalem shall be holy,  
And strangers shall no more pass through her.
- 18 And it shall come to pass that in that day the mountains shall drop down with new  
wine,  
And the hills shall flow with milk,  
And all the river beds of Judah shall be full of water,  
And a fountain shall flow forth from the house of Jehovah,  
And shall water the valley of Shittim.
- 19 Egypt shall be a desolation,  
And Edom shall be a desolate wilderness,  
For their violence against Judah's sons ;  
Because they shed blood in their land.
- 20 But Judah shall dwell <sup>16</sup> forever,  
And Jerusalem from generation to generation ;
- 21 And I will avenge their blood, *which* I have not avenged,  
And Jehovah will dwell in Zion.

## TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 1. — *Those days, i. e.*, preëminently. In Heb. the personal and demonstrative pronouns sometimes take the article, thus rendering the expression all the stronger and more emphatic.

<sup>2</sup> Ver. 2. — יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ. For the construction see Josh. iv. 2 ; 2 Chron. xxii. 8 ; Is. iii. 14 ; Ezek. xxxviii. 22. In the latter place אֱלֹהֵינוּ is used for אֱלֹהֵי.

<sup>3</sup> Ver. 2. — אֲנִי אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, my *peculium*. The word expresses more than אֱלֹהֵינוּ, my people. Israel is in apposition with both terms.

<sup>4</sup> Ver. 2. — The nations, *i. e.*, the neighboring ones. See ver. 12.

<sup>5</sup> Ver. 3. — For wine. ב is here the ב of price, and according to the rule is placed after verbs of buying and selling.

<sup>6</sup> Ver. 4. — *Borders*, מְגִלֹת מַיִם, lit., circles, referring to the five subdivisions of Philistia, namely, Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkalon, Gath, and Ekron.

<sup>7</sup> Ver. 4. — *Would you retaliate*. Wünsche renders the clause, "Wollt ihr ein Thun mir vergelten," and adds that it is variously explained. The meaning depends on the sense attached to מְגִלֹת מַיִם. The ground sense of its radical syllable מַיִם is fullness, accumulation. The primary meaning of מְגִלֹת מַיִם is the same. It is used — (1) *Intrans.*, to be full, or complete, specially of fruit, to be ripe. (2) *Trans.*, to complete, to make full, *i. e.* : (a) To wean, or to take from milk (Gen. xxi. 8 ; 1 Sam. xxii. 24 ; Is. xxviii. 9). (b) To ripen with special reference to fruit. (c) To do something with the hands, *i. e.*, to finish it. (d) To recompense what has been done by another, so that its end and aim is accomplished, — something done, in a moral sense, for which men are responsible. It is construed both with ל and עָל.

<sup>8</sup> Ver. 4. — *Soon and swiftly*. See Is. v. 26. Pocock takes both the words adverbially.

<sup>9</sup> Ver. 5. — *Goodly desirable things*. Newcome renders the phrase *desirable and goodly*. הַטֹּבִים = not simply "good things," but "good" in a pregnant sense, *optima*.

<sup>10</sup> Ver. 7. — *I will raise*. מְעִירָם. Hiph. of the intrans. עָרַר, to be hot, hence to be watchful. One Kenn. MSS. has הַמְעִירָם, I am calling, or will call them as witnesses.

<sup>11</sup> Ver. 10. — *Mattocks*. אֲתֵרֶם. This was an instrument of husbandry having an edge that needed to be sharpened from time to time (1 Sam. xxii. 20). All the older versions render it "ploughshares," which Tregelles favors.

<sup>12</sup> Ver. 11. — עָרַזְהוּ, a ἀπαξ λεγ., perhaps used for עָרַזְוּ or עָרַזוּ. The Sept. renders it συμβαλλοῖσθε. Vulg. *erumpite*; Gesen., Meier, and others, "hasten." For the use of the ו to show the close connection between the two imperatives, see Mic. iv. 13. Kimehi, Ewald, Meier, and others take the following עָרַזְוּ עָרַזְוּ as an anom. Niphal imperative for עָרַזְוּ עָרַזְוּ.

<sup>13</sup> Shall bring down, lit., "hath brought down." What He will do is spoken of as done.

<sup>14</sup> Ver. 13. — מְגִלֹת, the sickle, from the root מָגַל ; hence the dag. fort.

<sup>15</sup> Ver. 16. — *But Jehovah*. ה is here clearly antithetic.

<sup>16</sup> Ver. 20. — הַיְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ is not to be understood in a passive sense, "*habitari*," but actively, *i. e.*, shall dwell in and possess the land.

## EXEGETICAL.

Vers. 1-3. **For behold in those days, etc.** The פֶּן in ver. 1 gives the reason for the thought that deliverance can be found only in Zion, in the day of the Lord, for then shall all heathen nations be judged. *In those days, i. e.*, the days that shall come, the "afterward" of the previous chapter. The signs of the event belong essentially to the event itself; but the time is more exactly determined by the statement "when I shall bring again," etc. This distinctly shows that the object of the day of the Lord is, the deliverance of the people of God. The judgment of the heathen world is simply a means to that end. **Bring back the captivity, or to return the captivity,** means to make an end of it. This phrase, from the use here made of it to designate the epoch of judgment as a *terminus technicus* for a *restitutio in integrum* promised to God's people, may have been borrowed from some more ancient prophecy. The condition out of which the captivity is brought appears from the close of ver. 2. But the conclusion of the chapter shows, that the captivity is not simply to end, but that its termination involves a positively new and higher order of things. **Judah and Jerusalem, i. e.**, Judah generally, Jerusalem specially.

Ver. 2. **All nations.** In the first instance, of course, all those that have offended against Israel; yet these are representatives of the heathen world in general, whose position towards God's people is essentially the same. **The valley of Jehoshaphat.** According to 2 Chron. xx., Jehoshaphat by the miraculous help of the Lord gained a great victory over a Gentile army, in a valley, which subsequently for this reason took the name of that king. Does the prophet here mean that valley? Keil and many others say, no. They insist that the valley of the prophet is an imaginary one, in or near Jerusalem, and is called the valley of Jehoshaphat = "Jehovah judges," because of its being the place of judgment. The valley certainly stands in close relation to Jerusalem, for in ver. 16 it is said that Jehovah, who there judges, shall utter his voice from Zion and Jerusalem. But in this case there is no need of applying a merely geographical measure. Jehovah may judge in a valley far distant from Jerusalem, and yet have his dwelling in Israel, in Zion, and Jerusalem. (See 2 Chron. xx. 15-17, where the Lord, while contending for Israel is, at the same time, regarded as being in his sanctuary in Jerusalem.) If the phrase is to be taken in a symbolic sense, it might be asked, why Joel should have fixed upon a "valley" as the place of judgment, and should have given it the name of a well-known king? He was undoubtedly thinking of the great event under Jehoshaphat. The name of this monarch was significant, and he calls the place "valley of Jehoshaphat," because he was reminded of that fortunate king who was victorious over Israel's enemies, and because of the peculiar significance of the name Jehoshaphat = Jehovah judges. By way of anticipation he tells what they have to expect, who are gathered there. To the question, does he mean that well-known valley then, we answer, yes, and no. Yes, because he evidently had in view the spot on which Jehoshaphat won his victory. No, because he as evidently goes on to describe a more than common battle fought on a spot which could be identified on no map. The multitudes gathered there are too vast to be as-

sembled in any ordinary valley. In painting this prophetic vision there can be no doubt that Joel had in his mind the historical narrative in 2 Chron. xx. **Deal with. E. V. Plead with, i. e.** to charge with crime, with the design of punishing it. Taking the word in its full sense of arguing a cause, it implies that the nations argue their own cause, and attempt to vindicate themselves, though, of course they could have no ground to stand upon, since Jehovah is alone and always in the right. **My people, my heritage.** Therefore what the nations did to Israel must be criminal. **They have scattered.** The prophet here has in mind what he afterwards more fully describes.

Ver. 3. They not only scattered God's people, but treated them with the greatest contempt. This, however, is only mentioned as *pars pro toto*. At least in ver. 19 the prophet looks beyond what was immediately before him, and names oppressions which Israel had long before experienced, so that it is evident that he is thinking of the heathen world in general, and of its hostility to God's people. A special reference to the future Exile is not to be assumed, as this does not yet come into the prophet's horizon.

[Pusey: ver. 1. *For, behold.* The prophet by the *for* shows that he is about to explain in detail, what he had before spoken of in sum. By the word *behold*, he stirs up our minds for something great, which he is to set before our eyes, and which we should not be prepared to expect or believe.—Ver. 2. *Valley of Jehoshaphat.* It may be that the imagery is furnished by that great deliverance which God gave to Jehoshaphat when *Ammon, and Moab, and Edom came against him*, and Jehoshaphat appealed to God, and God turned their swords every one against the other. *And they assembled themselves in the valley of Berachah* (blessing); *for there they blessed the Lord.* 2 Chron. xx. 21. That valley, however, is nowhere called the *valley of Jehoshaphat*. It continued, says the sacred writer, to be called *the valley of Berachah unto this day*. And it is so called still. Southwest of Bethlehem and east of Tekoa are still three or four acres of ruin (Robinson, *Pal.*, iii. 275), bearing the name of *Boreikut* (Seeetzen's *Map*; Ritter, *Erdk.*, xv. 635; Wolcott, *Excurs. to Hebron*, p. 43). The only valley called the valley of Jehoshaphat is the valley of Kedron, encircling Jerusalem on the east. The valley was the common burial-place for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. (Williams, *H. C.*, ii. 523; Thomson, *Land and Book*, ii. 481.—Ver. 3. *Cast lots.* They treated God's people as of no account, and delighted in showing their contempt towards them. They chose no one above another as though all alike were worthless. *A girl* they sold for an evening's revelry, and *a boy* they exchanged for a night's debauch.

Wünsche: ver. 3. According to the then prevalent custom, the prisoners of war were sold as slaves. *My people.* We are to understand by this, not the people as a whole, but only the portion taken captive. But the mistreatment of this part of the covenant people, in the view of the O. T. prophets, was a mistreatment of the whole body.—F.]

Vers. 4-8. **And also what have ye, etc.** After speaking of the crimes of the heathen in general, against Israel, the prophet turns to the neighboring nations, Tyre, Sidon, and the borders of Philistia, *i. e.*, the five small Philistine principalities. He, suddenly, as it were, remembers those who

had committed such crimes against Israel as those already mentioned. The question, in fact, especially concerns them. With the genus comes the species which is included in it. In a lively description, we find ourselves in the midst of the nations (comp. ver. 11) with whom the process of pleading by Jehovah is carried on. For afterwards there is no more pleading, but a decision. They are represented as claiming to be right; but any presumptive claim of theirs to do what they had done is denied, in the first instance, by the general question, "what have ye to do with me?" a question more fully answered afterwards. Their right to inflict injury upon Israel, or to retaliate for injuries inflicted upon themselves, is denied. They are the persons on whom the retaliation shall come, and that swiftly. Vers. 5, 6 prove the righteousness of the retribution, by a reference to the crimes committed, while vers. 7, 8 declare the certainty of it. Ver. 5 alludes, without doubt, to the pillaging of Judah and Jerusalem by the Philistines and Arabians under Joram. 2 Chron. xxi. 17. They then carried off the treasures of the temple and the palaces of the city, the latter being designated as "Mine," because they belonged to those who were among God's people. The Philistines were the immediate perpetrators of the robbery, but the Phœnicians, the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon, were also involved in the guilt of it, for they bought the captives and sold them to the sons of Javan, or the Greeks of Asia Minor. In vers. 7, 8, there is a promise that these enslaved captives shall be brought home again, and that, in retaliation, the same thing shall be done to these enemies of Israel, which they have done to Israel. Jehovah will sell them into the hands of the children of Judah, who will again sell them to the Sabæans in Arabia Felix. This prophecy was fulfilled by Alexander the Great and his successors, under whom many Jewish captives were liberated and restored to their own land, while various parts of Philistia and Phœnicia were brought under Jewish rule.

[Pusey: ver. 4. *What have ye to do with me.* These words declare that those nations had no part in God. He accounts them as aliens. But the words convey besides, that they would, unprovoked, have to do with God, harassing his people without cause.—Ver. 5. *My silver.* Not the silver and gold of the temple, as some have thought. At least, up to the Prophet's time they had not done this. God calls the silver and the gold, which He through his providence had bestowed on Judah, *my silver and my gold.*—Ver. 6. *And ye have sold,* etc. This sin of the Tyrians was probably old and inveterate. As they were the great carriers of the world's traffic, so they were slave-dealers, and in the earliest times, men-stealers. The Greek antehistoric tradition exhibits them as trading and selling women from both Greece and Egypt. As their trade became more fixed, they themselves stole no more, but like Christian nations, sold those whom others stole or made captive. Even from the times of the Judges, Israel was exposed in part to the violence and fraud of Tyre and Sidon. Sisera's army came from their territory, and Deborah speaks of "a damsel or two" as the expected prey of each man in his host. In Joel, the Philistines and Tyrians appear as combined in the traffic. In Amos, the Philistines are the robbers of men, the Phœnicians are the receivers and the sellers. Probably such acts were expressly prohibited by the "brotherly covenant," or treaty between Solomon and Hiram, king of Tyre. For Amos says that Tyre forgot that treaty, when she sold

wholesale the captive Israelites whom the Philistines had carried off. The temptation to Tyrian covetousness was aggravated by the ease with which they could possess themselves of the Jews, the facility of transport, and, as it seems, their value. The wholesale price at which Nicanor set the Jews his expected prisoners, and at which he hoped to sell 180,000, shows the extent of the traffic; and their relative value, £2 14s. 9d., as the average price of each of ninety slaves in Judæa, implies a retail price at the place of sale above the then ordinary price of man.—Ver. 8. *I will sell your sons—the Sabæans.* Tyre was taken by Alexander, who sold 13,000 of the inhabitants into slavery. Sidon was taken by Artaxerxes Ochus, and it is said above 40,000 perished. The Sabæans are probably mentioned as being the remotest nation in the opposite direction, a nation, probably, the partner of Tyre's traffic in men as well as in their other merchandise, and who would as soon trade in Tyrians, as with Tyrians. They were, like the Phœnicians, a wealthy merchant people, and, of old, united with them in the trade of the world, the Sabæans, sending forth their fleets across the Indian Ocean, as the Tyrians along the Mediterranean Sea. Three fathers of distinct races bore the name of Sheba, one a descendant of Ham, the other two descended from Shem. The Shemite Sabæans were, some descendants from Sheba the tenth son of Joktan; the others from Sheba, son of Abraham and Keturah. The Sheba of the prophet appears to have been the wealthy Sheba (descended from Joktan) near the Red Sea. They too had distant colonies whither the Tyrians could be transported, as far from Phœnicia as the shores of the Ægean are from Palestine.

Wünche: *Tyre*, lit., *Rock*. Though Tyre was historically a younger city than Sidon, from its rapid growth and great importance as a commercial centre, it is usually mentioned first when the two cities are named together. There were two Tyres, namely, the Old, built on the main land, and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar after a siege of thirteen years, and the New, built on a rocky island about a mile from the shore. *Sidon* comes from צידון, to fish. Its founders were probably fishermen.—*Desirable things—Your temples.* If by the first phrase the prophet means the rich adornments of God's temple, and by the latter the heathen temples, the crime here charged is the double one of spoliation and profanation.—*Javan.* Credner regards this as the name of a city in Arabia Felix. Hitzig places it in Jemen, and thinks it to be the same as the one mentioned Ezek. xxvii. 19. Schröder takes the word in the sense of distant, unknown nations. But it is undoubtedly the name of the Greeks of Asia Minor.—[F.]

Vers. 9, 10. **Proclaim this.** The prophet has already spoken of the gathering of the nations in the valley of Jehoshaphat, where Jehovah will plead with them. We have heard the accusation and the sentence; and now comes the swift execution of it. **Proclaim this.** What? If it be **Prepare (sanctify) war,** and this is to be proclaimed to the heathen, those charged to bear the message should be the heralds of the heathen. But the contents of the message show that it is directed not to the heathen but to Israel. No one shall remain behind, nor feel himself weak, nor withdraw from the holy contest, which is to bring "decision." It must be considered, then, as a summons to Israel. The battle described is no common one. It is a battle, in which Jehovah Himself shall be present as a judge deciding the fate of the heathen, and help-

ing Israel to win a glorious victory over them. The summoner is Jehovah Himself, or the prophet speaking in his name, who, in his vivid description of the contest, feels himself to be present at it. *Proclaim this* must, then refer to what was said before, namely: that Jehovah will recompense the heathen for their crimes against Israel, and that Israel shall be fully avenged. For the counterpart of the proposed change of the implements of peace into the instruments of war, see Is. ii. 4; Mic. iv. 3.

[Wünsche: *Proclaim*, lit., sanctify. The use of this word shows that this great and decisive war is a holy and a righteous one. Credner, Hitzig, Keil, and others regard this as addressed not to the Jews, but to the heathen nations, *i. e.*, to their heralds who are, at the bidding of Jehovah, to summon these nations to a war against Israel. But on this supposition the use of the word "sanctify" is inexplicable. — F.]

Vers. 11-16. *Hasten and come.* Now the nations are summoned to collect speedily, as if they were about to accomplish something against Israel, while really they are rushing to their own destruction. Round about. The reference is not to the immediate neighbors of Israel, but the expression is used because God's people is regarded as holding a central position among the nations. The prophet, however, cannot think of the assemblage of the nations without offering a prayer to Jehovah that He would cause his mighty ones to come down, where the gathering occurs, in the valley of Jehoshaphat. *Thy mighty ones.* According to Keil they are the angels as heavenly hosts. But if in ver. 9 they are men (Keil refers that version to the heathen), they must also be men here. The idea of the angels coming from heaven to help is not Joel's. It is Israel who fights, under the command of Jehovah (comp. Judges v. 13). *Thy* affords no proof against this exposition, since Israel is God's people, and Israel's mighty ones are God's.

Ver. 12. Here Jehovah himself speaks, and the whole verses may, therefore, be regarded as a kind of answer to the prophet's prayer. Jehovah summons the nations to awake and to come up (אָרָא here means to ascend) to the valley of Jehoshaphat. For though the gathering place is a valley, and Israel's mighty ones go down into it from Zion, yet the heathen come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat, because, being near to Jerusalem, it is on a higher elevation than the territories (*e. g.*, Philistia) of the neighboring nations. The reason why they are to come up to this valley is found in the meaning of the name Jehoshaphat = "Jehovah sits there to judge." He does not engage directly in the contest; He does not lead the army, but He sits on a throne to judge, — to pronounce the sentence, and to execute it by means of his mighty ones. At the same time he renders essential aid by those terrible phenomena of nature spoken of (vers. 15, 16), which mark the contest as "the day of the Lord," the result of which is the utter destruction of these enemies. How Jehovah will execute the sentence pronounced by Him as Judge, is explained in ver. 13, for the exhortation here addressed to the "mighty ones," while the two armies front each other in battle array, is given by Jehovah. This is evident from the fact that the battle is to be the execution of a deserved sentence. Hence the attack and the fight are no more spoken of, but the result simply, represented by the figure of cutting down ripe corn. Of a

threshing and winnowing of the corn thus cut down, as Keil suggests, there is no hint; for with these enemies of Jehovah there could be no separating the wheat and the chaff. The only point in the figure on which attention is fixed, is the "cutting down" what had been before standing. Then comes a new and stronger simile to represent the destruction of these enemies. They shall not only be "cut off," but "crushed," or trodden like grapes in the wine-press. The overflowing "fulness of the vats" is significant (Keil denies it). It represents the general blood-shedding which shall be proportioned to the "greatness of their wickedness." The execution itself is not formally described, but it is plainly enough indicated in ver. 14. *Multitudes*, or as some render it "tumult." The "mighty ones" are now to engage in their bloody work, amid the uproar of battle. The noise expressed or implied is not, as Keil supposes, that of nations rushing together, for they are already assembled, and now, the moment is one of judgment, or "decision." The valley is the valley of Jehoshaphat, the "valley of decision," the phrase being immediately followed by the words "for the day of the Lord is come." This shows that what had been commanded (ver. 13) is now being accomplished, and that the contest involves the judgment and destruction of these enemies. This catastrophe is the "day of the Lord," which is attended by those awful phenomena described (vers. 15, 16), by which Jehovah displays his omnipotence, and really determines the issue of the battle. The "darkness," before noticed as a prelude of "the day," now introduces it. "Thunder" = an immediate display of God's power. "Giving forth his voice," lit., "roaring," *i. e.*, of the lion in pursuit of prey, denotes God's design to punish and destroy. Of course Joel has in his mind not an ordinary thunder-storm, but a far more terrible one. Israel had been previously threatened with a day of punishment marked by similar presages, in connection with the visitation of locusts, but it had passed away. Now, however, the storm overtakes and destroys the heathen, while Israel is not only protected by Jehovah from the judgments that overwhelm the enemies of God, but is introduced into new and far higher privileges than ever before were possessed.

[Wünsche: Ver. 12. *Sit to judge.* This posture of the judge was common to the Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans. In Latin, *sedere* is often used in the sense of *judicare* (Liv. iii. 46); so in Greek καθίστημι. The decision of a judge made by him standing, was generally deemed to have no legal force. *All nations.* The "all" is limited by "round about." Hengstenberg, Keil, and others understand by it all the nations who have become in any way related to the kingdom of God, *i. e.*, all the nations of the earth, as before the final judgment, the Gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world. Credner supposes that the meaning of the double image used in ver. 13 is, that as songs of gladness, dancing, and other signs of joy mark the harvest and vintage, so the Jews will find the highest enjoyment in the day of judgment of their enemies. But there is no ground for supposing that the covenant people will have any such feelings.

Pusey: Ver. 13. In itself, the harvest as well as the vintage, might describe the end of this world as to both the good and the bad, in that the wheat is severed from the chaff and the tares, and the treading of the wine-press separates the wine which is stored up from the husks which are cast

away. Yet nothing is said here of storing up aught, either the wheat or the wine, but only of the ripeness of the harvest, and that the *vats overflow because their wickedness is great*. The harvest is sometimes, though more rarely, used for destruction; the treading of the wine-press is always used as an image of God's anger; the vintage, of destruction. It seems probable then, that the ripeness of the harvest and the fullness of the vats are alike used of the ripeness for destruction. — Ver. 14. The prophet continues, as in amazement at the great throng assembling upon one another, *multitudes, multitudes*, as though, whichever way he looked, there were yet more of these tumultuous masses. It was one living, surging, boiling sea; throngs upon throngs, mere throngs. The word rendered *multitudes* suggests, besides, the thought of the hum and din of these masses, thronging, onward blindly, to their own destruction. — [F.]

Vers. 17-21. **And ye shall know.** Jehovah, by his judgment of Israel's enemies, proves Himself to be Israel's God; and from Zion, his dwelling place, all strangers and unclean ones are banished. This is the immediate gain to Israel, but other benefits are consequent upon it (comp. Rev. xxi. 27). A time of extraordinary prosperity follows.

Ver. 18. Wine and milk flow in richest abundance. The mountains and the hills, *i. e.*, the naturally sterile districts, become very fruitful, and as this result depends on the supply of water, the brooks shall not become dry. Vale of Shittim, or Valley of Acacias, now quite dry, — for in such a soil the acacia grows, — shall be watered by a fountain flowing from the house of the Lord, and shall become fruitful. This description, of course, is not to be taken in its merely literal sense. As the blessedness originates with Jehovah, the fertilizing stream is represented as coming from the Temple, the dwelling-place of God. What a contrast between the state of things here depicted, and the condition of the land after its devastation by the locusts!

Ver. 19. To render Israel's blessed condition the more conspicuous, the picture of the desolated heathendom is placed beside it. Egypt and Edom are specially mentioned on account of their violence against Judah's sons, namely, shedding their blood. It is uncertain, what precise instances of this are referred to. Egypt's sins were probably those of the olden time (Ex. i. 16). For that of Edom, see Amos i. 11; Ob. 10. They, however, like the Phœnicians and Philistines in another place, are here taken as representatives of the enemies of Israel. (Comp. in ref. to Edom Is. xxxiv. 63; Jer. xlix. 7; Ezek. iii. 5.)

Ver. 20. Wholly different shall be the condition of Israel. Judah and Jerusalem shall dwell forever, *i. e.*, they shall be inhabited.

Ver. 21. While Israel is thus blessed, it will be proved that the wrong committed against him has been fully avenged, or as some take the word, annulled, *i. e.*, by having been punished; and the all-embracing assurance is repeated, *Jehovah shall dwell in Zion*.

[Pusey: Ver. 18. *A fountain shall come forth out of the house of the Lord.* The existence of a large supply of water under the Temple is beyond all question. While the Temple was still standing, mention is made of an ever-flowing fountain under it, as well as pools and cisterns for preserving rain-water. One well acquainted with the localities says, "The pavements had slopes for the sake of a flush of water in order to cleanse away the

blood from the victims. For on festival occasions many thousands of animals were slain. But of water there was an unfailing supply, a copious and natural fountain within gushing over; and there being moreover wonderful underground receptacles, in the substructure of the temple, and each of these having numerous pipes, the several streams inter-communicating." The same writer relates that, more than half a mile from the city, he was told to stoop down, and heard the sound of gushing waters underground. The natural fountain, then, beneath the Temple, was doubtless augmented by waters brought from a distance, as required by the "diverse washings" of the priests, and to carry off the blood of the victims. Whence-soever this water was supplied, it furnished Jerusalem with an abundant supply of water. The superfluous water was carried off underground to what is now "the fountain of the Virgin," and thence again to the "pool of Siloam." Thence it carried fertility to the gardens of Siloam. The blood of the victims flowed into the same brook, Kedron, and was a known source of fertility. That little oasis of verdure was a fit emblem of the Jewish people, itself bedewed by the stream which issued from the temple of God. But it made no sensible impression out of or beyond itself. Hereafter the stream, whose streamlets "made glad the city of God," should make the wildest, driest spots of our humanity "like the garden of the Lord." *Valley of Shittim*, or acacia-trees, is a dry valley, for in such the eastern acacia or sandalwood grows. This wood is very strong and of incredible lightness and beauty. Of it the ark of God was made. — Ver. 19. *Egypt a desolation.* Brief as Joel's words are, they express an abiding condition of Egypt. They are expanded by Ezekiel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Zechariah. But the three words of Joel are more comprehensive than any prophecy, except those of Ezekiel. They foretell that abiding condition, not only by the force of the words, but by the contrast with an abiding condition of bliss. The words say, not only that it shall "be desolated" as by a passing scourge, but it "shall pass over into that state;" it shall become what it had not been, and this, in contrast with the abiding condition of God's people. Yet when Joel threatened Egypt, there were no human symptoms of decay; the instruments of its successive overthrows were as yet wild hordes, or had not the beginnings of being. Egypt would not become barren except by miracle. Even now it recovers whenever water is applied. Nothing could desolate Egypt except man's abiding negligence or oppression. No passing storm could annihilate a fertility which poured in upon it in ever-renewing richness. Egypt is alike prolific in its people, and in the productions of the earth. Yet with these powers implanted in nature unimpaired, the population is diminished, the land half desert. Persians, Macedonians, Romans, Greeks, Arabs, and Turks, have tried their hands on Egypt. Strange that selfishness or powerlessness for good should have rested upon all; strange that no one should have developed its inherent powers. One long prosperity, and one long adversity. One scarcely broken day, and one troubled night. And that doom foretold in the mid-day of its prosperity by these three words, *Egypt shall be a desolation — Edom a desolate wilderness*. Its ancient capital, and its rock-dwellings long unknown, have been within the last forty years, again revealed to us. The land is almost the more hopelessly desolate, because it was once artificially cultivated. Edom

was the centre of the intercourse of nations. The hill-sides, and mountains, once covered with earth and clothed with vineyards, are now bare rocks. Yet the traces of former fertility are innumerable: every spot capable of sustaining vegetable life was carefully watered and cultivated. The ancient inhabitants seem to have left no accessible place untouched. They have exhibited equal art and industry in eliciting from the grand walls of their marvelous capital, whatever the combination of climate, irrigation, and botanical skill could foster in the scanty soil afforded them. The desolation began soon after the captivity of Judah, and Edom's malicious joy in it. In Joel's time, not the slightest shadow was cast on her future. No human eye could tell that she would be finally desolate. But God said by Joel, "Edom shall be a desolate wilderness," and so it is!—Ver. 21. *I will cleanse her blood.* The word rendered *cleansed*, is not used for natural cleansing, nor is the image taken from the cleansing of the body. The word signifies only to pronounce innocent, or to free from guilt. Nor is *blood* used of sinfulness generally, but only of the actual guilt of shedding blood. The whole then cannot be an image taken from the cleansing of physical defilement, like the words of Ezek. xvi. 9, "then washed I thee with water," etc. Nor, again, can it mean the forgiveness of sins generally, but only the pronouncing innocent the blood which had been shed. This the only meaning of the words, falls in with the mention of innocent blood, for shedding which, Egypt and Edom had been condemned. In punishing the shedding of it, God declared the blood innocent, whose shedding He punished. — F.]

#### THEOLOGICAL.

1. Three topics are discussed in this chapter: the enmity of the "nations" against Israel; the punishment of the nations; and the new happiness of Israel.

(1.) The enmity of the nations against Israel. How does the prophet regard this? Is the hostility only accidental, exhibiting itself simply in some particular acts? Or has it a deeper ground, namely, in the antagonism of the nations as heathen against Israel as God's people, or the antagonism between idolatry and the worship of the true God? The mere words of the prophet would not lead us to suppose that he regarded it in the latter light. He speaks only of acts of pillage, carrying away captives, shedding of blood. Nor must we interpret ver. 5 as if the acts described were directed against the Temple as such; nor are they the necessary and exclusive offspring of heathenism. But we may and must say that these acts of injury appeared to be the outgrowth of the religious antagonism between the Gentiles and Israel. The people of Israel were God's people, and enmity against the former was in fact enmity against God's people, and God himself. That the prophet so regards it, vers. 4, 5 plainly show. This hostility of the Gentiles or nations, though in one sense accidental, really reflects an inward and profound hatred. Hence the general expression, "all ye heathen, or Gentile," although, in point of fact, Israel had been injured only by some of them. Thus Israel stands on one side, and all the heathen or Gentiles on the other, in the attitude of antagonists. What one of the latter does, they may be all expected to do, and so may be held responsible for it, inasmuch as they

constitute one whole. Therefore, if Israel is to be helped, the judgment must fall on the whole heathen world. Finally, the prophet nowhere intimates that the Gentiles should be employed as God's instruments in punishing Israel for his guilt. The Gentiles alone appear as the guilty ones.

(2.) The punishment of the nations was a certain and necessary result of Israel's position as God's people. They had scattered them; they had parted their land; they had taken their silver and gold; in a word, they had thus taken God's property, and He could not allow this to go unpunished. He must stand up for his people and destroy their enemies. Though Israel is the agent in inflicting, yet the punishment comes really from the divine hand. Jehovah assembles the nations, and, in the contest between them and his people, gives, by his immediate help, the victory to the latter. This punishment involves the destruction of these enemies. The menaces relating to this point may seem unduly severe; but it is to be observed that the guilt of these nations is very aggravated, going far beyond the ordinary measure of enmity and crime, and therefore, according to the *ius talionis*, the retribution should be proportionate. Credner's idea that Joel here abandons himself to the feelings of unbridled revenge, is wholly groundless. Meier justly remarks against this notion, that no prophet ever describes these bloody conflicts as simply growing out of human revenge; they ever regard them as signs of that Higher Power which strikes with destruction everything ungodly. And while the later prophets do not speak of bloody phenomena such as are here described, they yet plainly intimate, that before the consummation of the Messianic age, a catastrophe involving such scenes must come, as a transition epoch, in which everything unholy, as well in Israel as in the heathen world, will be destroyed. The grand object on which all depends, and which faith accepts as certain, is the complete subjugation of God's enemies, and the complete triumph of his people. The pencil that paints this picture is, indeed, dipped in strong colors, corresponding to the energy of the divine powers which shall realize it. The idea set forth is the essential thing; the expression of it is, of course, modified by the prophet's historical relations, and the character of the times in which he lived.

(3.) Israel's new felicity. Amid the extraordinary manifestations of divine wrath connected with the destruction of the wicked, Israel is protected and realizes anew that Jehovah is his God. His land shall no more be seized by a stranger, and its remarkable fertility will be a proof that Jehovah is dwelling in the midst of it. The latter is the main thing in the promise, the productiveness of the land being simply an evidence of it. Of this the fountain issuing forth from the house of the Lord is a symbol and a pledge. Here the promise goes beyond what is merely physically possible, as do also some features of the judgment of the heathen; from which it is plain that the prophet's mind was fixed, not so much on the literal fulfillment of the prediction, as upon the general truth, that Jehovah will, in a manner eminent and unequivocal, own Israel as his people, by bestowing on him the richest blessings.

2. If now we inquire into the fulfillment of this prophecy, objectively considered, we shall quickly discover, that things took at first quite a different shape from that which Joel seems to have supposed they would. He sees in the heathen only the enemies of God's people who are to be pun

ished, and he announces their certain punishment on account of their many acts of violence against Israel. The later prophets, on the other hand, charge God's own people with their sins, and predict judgments, which God will employ the heathen as his instruments to inflict, and which, we know, in later times they did. But there is no evidence, *i. e.*, from his prophecy, that Joel was acquainted with this fact of the future. It is wholly unwarrantable to interpret his words (ver. 1), as if he had foreseen and foretold what later prophets announced, namely, the Exile, and the dispersion by the Romans, without giving the reason for either of these events. He does not think it possible — so far as his prophecy shows — that a divine judgment should be inflicted upon Israel. Both the internal (*i. e.*, the guiltiness of Israel and Judah) and the external antecedent conditions of such a judgment are wanting. He knows nothing of those secular powers which brought on the exile, or at least, he does not know them as powers with whom Israel is to come into conflict. It is a false view of the nature of prophecy to suppose that events of the most distant future were revealed with equal clearness to the prophets whose experience, in a sort of intermediate way, corresponded with, or contradicted that future. According to the later prophets the glorious state of Israel is reached, after his having passed through an intermediate condition of humiliation. Joel knows nothing of such an intermediate condition. He represents the felicity of Israel as resulting not simply from the truthfulness of God, who will not utterly abandon even his unfaithful people, while He punishes them, but as a thing which they might at any time secure by penitential confession of sins, and calling upon the Lord. But there is an essential harmony between Joel and the later prophets. How then were their predictions fulfilled? The menaces against the heathen nations mentioned have been remarkably accomplished by actual historical events, particularly by Alexander the Great and his successors. But we must look for a larger and fuller accomplishment of the prophecies of Joel. It is evident that he had in his mind a grand consummation, since he connects it with the general outpouring of the Spirit and the announcement of the day of the Lord. He sees the heathen world utterly overwhelmed, while Israel enters into and holds the position of God's people. The period of conflict is passed, and that of victory and peace has come.

Now as regards the fulfillment of these prophecies, we might repeat the remarks already made respecting the later ones of Hosea. For Israel as a nation that glorious time had not yet come; nor was there any ground for the immediate expectation of it. The tenor of the prophecy would seem to indicate that it applied exclusively to Israel, because in Joel's time, Israel alone was God's people. But this view, which makes God's people and Israel as a nation identical, though sanctioned in a certain sense by the Old Covenant, has been clearly set aside by the New Covenant. While then the Jewish nation, as such, has no ground for expecting, as the Chiliasts maintain, this promised felicity, it is nevertheless certain that the promise is valid for the people of God as typified by Israel. Its fulfillment is to be looked for in a far different and more glorious way than the prophet, from his stand-point, anticipated. [Whether the so-called Chiliastic theory of the future of the Jews be true or not, there is no necessary antagonism between it and the admission, under the New Covenant, of

the Gentiles to the spiritual privileges of God's people. The Jews still exist as a distinct people. And Paul certainly seems to intimate (Rom. xi. 25) that there is yet a glorious future for Israel, which shall be realized when "the fullness of the Gentiles be come in." — F.] The new Israel lives in the hope of a general outpouring of the Spirit which was begun at Pentecost, and has been continued ever since, — of a final, complete deliverance, and a glorious victory over all its enemies, in a word, of a felicity and salvation which shall be a proof of God's immediate presence in the midst of it. Whether Joel foresaw all this, *i. e.*, understood the full meaning of his own prediction, may be doubted; but, in the sense already explained, we can appropriate it to ourselves, as Keil remarks: "The people and heritage of the Lord is not only the Old Testament Israel as such, but the Church of God, embracing those who lived under the New as well as the Old Covenant. On it his Spirit is poured out. Jehovah's judgment of the nations for injuries done to his people is not simply the judgment of such of them, *e. g.*, the Romans and others, that have maltreated the Jews, but the final, general judgment of all nations, of all the enemies of the Church of God. It is this fundamental truth, this glorious hope made sure by almost the oldest of the prophets, which the people of God, from the beginning, have lifted up as a standard. And hence we see in all the victories which God has granted to his people, and in all the judgments inflicted upon the heathen neighbors and enemies of Israel, a fulfillment of this promise, which again finds, as by a thousandfold refraction, a still more particular fulfillment in all the special deliverances of his children, and in all their experiences of his protection. So Luther is not wrong in regarding the rich blessings promised to Judah as identical with those revealed in the Gospel, and through it bestowed upon the Christian Church. As God's heritage, Zion experienced from the first, and continues to experience, the blessed presence and the grace of God. Still, the final, and complete fulfillment will only come with the consummation of the kingdom of the Parousia, or Second Advent of the Lord.

#### HOMILETICAL.

Ver. 1. *When I shall bring again.* God hath set bounds to everything, especially to the sufferings of his people. He determines their beginning, and how long they shall endure. Rejoice, ye faithful, the Lord shall bring again your captivity. He will deliver you from all evil, and help you to reach his heavenly kingdom.

[HENRY: Though the bondage of God's people may be grievous and very long, yet it shall not be everlasting. There is a *day*, there is a *time*, fixed for the *bringing again of the captivity of God's children*, for the redeeming them from the *power of the grave*. — F.]

Ver. 2. *I will gather all nations.* Though wicked men say that the Lord does not see them, they shall learn by experience that He does, in the time when He shall judge them. Ye proud Gentiles, who cease not to afflict the little flock of the faithful, know that a day of judgment is coming, when the Lord will avenge the blood of his servants. — *Whom they have scattered.* Those who are unjustly exiled should leave vengeance in the hands of God the righteous judge. Mark that all divine punishment, and even the final judgment of the wicked is for

the sake of the godly. Behold how God takes care of his people! Therefore, be of good courage! Dost thou belong to God's people? Then He will take care of thee, though He may seem to delay doing so. God's honor will not permit his people to perish, and their enemies to triumph, for their enemies are his enemies.

[PUSEY: *Will plead with them.* God maketh Himself in such wise a party, as not to condemn those unconvicted, yet the pleading has a separate awfulness of its own. God interpleads, so as to allow Himself to be interpleaded and answered; but there is no answer. He will set forth what He had done, and how we have required Him. And we are without excuse. Our memories witness against us; our knowledge acknowledges his justice; our conscience convicts us; all unite in pronouncing ourselves ungrateful, and God holy and just. For a sinner to see himself is to condemn himself, and in the day of judgment God will bring before each sinner his whole self. — F.]

Vers. 3-5. *They have cast lots.* In a time of war terrible crimes are very common, but in due season God will punish them. — *What have ye to do with me.* The true Church is the heavenly Father's daughter, and Christ's beloved spouse. Therefore he who persecutes it, is persecuting God and Christ. How great the foolishness of sinners who want to plead with and defy God! O, how certainly will their defiance of Him be visited on their own head. Therefore be humble, and confess thy misdeeds, if thou wouldst escape divine punishment.

[PUSEY: *Will ye render me a recompense.* Men never want pleas for themselves. Men forget their own wrong-doings, and remember their sufferings. Men, when they submit not to God chastening them, hate Him.

HENRY: *My silver.* Those who take away the estates of good men for well-doing, will be found guilty of sacrilege; they take God's silver and gold. It is no new thing for those who have been very civil to their neighbors, to find them very unkind and unneighborly, and for those who do no injuries to suffer many. — F.]

Vers. 1-7. The raging of the nations and their rulers is an indication of that fleshly mind which is always opposed to the kingdom of God. So long as the hope of that kingdom was confined to Israel, the hatred of the heathen was spent on Israel. When that kingdom was taken from Israel, and given to the "little flock," which "brought forth the fruit of it," that hatred was simply transferred. The world ever has sought and still seeks to divide the heritage of the Lord, and to bring to shame those who trust in his word of promise. But when God regathers his scattered people Israel, and re-establishes down-trodden Jerusalem, He will also deliver the rest of his elect, and fully recompense them for the sufferings which the world has inflicted on them.

Ver. 9. *Prepare war.* Peace must end when we are called on to combat the enemies of God. Then, all must take up arms. "I came not to send peace, but a sword." Through conflict to victory! through war to peace!

Ver. 10. [PUSEY: *Ploughshares into swords.* Peace within with God flows forth in peace with man. Where there is not rest in God, all is unrest. And so, all which was needful for life, the means of subsistence, care of health, were to be forgotten for war. — F.]

Vers. 11, 12. *Hasten and come.* Behold how the Lord holds the godless persecutors of his Church in derision! Let them do what they like, his ven-

geance shall finally overtake them. If God be for us, who can be against us? The Lord sits as ruler, and is ever judging nations and individuals. No one can escape his judgment. He may long seem to be silent, but ever and anon He comes forth with his judgments now, the harbingers of the final and decisive one.

[HENRY: *Thy mighty ones.* When God's cause is to be pleaded, either by the law or by the sword, He has those ready who will plead it effectually; witnesses ready to appear for Him in the court of judgment, soldiers ready to appear for Him in the field of battle. — F.]

Ver. 13. *For their wickedness is great.* When the measure of men's sins is full, then execution comes. The judgments of God are then no longer delayed.

Vers. 14-16. *The day of the Lord is near.* Tremble ye godless, for the day is near when the Lord will judge you! Behold, the lion is already roaring out of Zion announcing your punishment. Should not that voice, which shall one day be heard by the whole earth, arouse you to repentance? To the wicked, God is a roaring lion, but to the godly a strong fortress.

As God always cared for and defended his peculiar people against the rage of their enemies, so Christ now protects his peculiar people, Christians, against the violence of their foes. He may allow them, for a time, to be persecuted, to try and perfect their faith by " manifold temptations," but, in the end, He will destroy their enemies. Examples of this have occurred in past ages; but a greater rain awaits them. When the great and terrible day of the Lord comes, He will gather all his enemies into the valley of Jehoshaphat; He will bring them before his tribunal, and plead with them for his heritage and people, and will return upon their own heads all the evils they have inflicted upon the true Christendom.

[HENRY: *The Lord shall roar.* The judgment of the great day shall make the ears of those to tingle who continue the implacable enemies of God. As blessings out of Zion are the sweetest blessings, and enough to make heaven and earth sing, so terrors out of Zion are the sorest terrors, and enough to make heaven and earth shake. — The saints are the Israel of God; now in the great day (1) Their longings shall be satisfied. *The Lord will be the Hope of his people.* As He always was the Founder and Foundation of their hopes, so He will then be the Crown of their hopes. They shall arrive at the desired haven; shall put to shore after a stormy voyage; they shall go to be forever at home with God. (2) Their happiness shall be confirmed. God will be in that day the *Strength of the children of Israel*, enabling them to welcome that day, and to bear up under the weight of its glories and joys. — F.]

Ver. 17. *Ye shall know.* So long as believers are here below, sighing under the burden of sin, and not seeing the means of deliverance, they are apt to think that God has abandoned them.

[HENRY: The knowledge which true believers have of God is (1) An *appropriating* knowledge, they know that He is the *Lord their God*, yet not theirs only, but theirs in common with the whole Church. (2) An *experimental* knowledge. They shall find Him their Hope and Strength, in the worst of times. Those know best the goodness of God, who have *tasted and seen* it.

PUSEY: God Himself joins on his own words to those of the prophet. *Ye shall know* by experience, by sight, face to face, what ye now believe

that I am the Lord your God. *Your God, your own*, as much as if possessed by none besides, filling all with gladness, yet fully possessed by each. — F.]

Ver. 18. *In that day.* Glorious are the promises to the Church of the New Covenant, but they will be completely fulfilled only in a blessed eternity. In this world God feeds us, comforts us with His Word and sacraments, consoles us with manifold blessings in Christ, but in the future world, this grace will be far more superabundant. — By the *mountains* are meant the kingdoms of this world, which shall flow with the wine and milk of Christian doctrine, by which a rich measure of spiritual gifts shall be imparted to men. For the Gospel is very finely compared to wine as well as milk; to wine, since it is administered to the adult to gladden his heart, and confirm his faith, hope, and love; to milk, as it is also administered to children in Christ, who, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word. As wine comforts and strengthens man's heart, so the Word of God preserves and increases faith, and imparts consolation under sufferings. The law does the opposite, holy and just though it be. It accuses them, and threatens death; it makes them faint-hearted and despondent. But the Gospel banishes fear, by revealing a Mediator, the Son of God, and filling the soul with an assurance of the mercy of God. By *rivers flowing with water*, the prophet means the wonderful spread of the Gospel, and the rich fruit it will produce. As dry places are barren, and well watered ones fertile, so where the Gospel resounds, the richest and ripest fruits are produced. The Holy Spirit goes with it, imparting his own divine gifts.

[PUSEY: As the fountain gushes forth from the hill or mountain side in one ceaseless flow, day and night, streaming out from the recesses to which the waters are supplied by God from his treasure-house of the rain, so day by day, in sorrow or in joy, in prosperity or adversity, God pours out in the Church, and in the souls of his elect, the riches of his grace. The love of God shall stream through every heart; each shall be full according to its capacity, and none the less full, because a larger tide pours through others. All the powers, capacities, senses, speech of the saints who *confess God* shall flow with a perennial stream of joy, thanksgiving, and jubilee, as of all pleasure and bliss. — F.]

Ver. 19. *Shed innocent blood.* How highly does the Lord esteem the death, the blood of the faithful!

[HENRY: The innocent blood of God's people is very precious to Him, and not a drop shall be shed, but it shall be reckoned for. — F.]

Vers. 20, 21. *Judah shall dwell forever.* The Church of the New Covenant is imperishable, for it shall be transplanted from time into eternity. Blessed Zion! in which the Lord dwells with his Word, and the gifts of his Spirit, and which He quickens by his converting and sanctifying power. Let us make here for ourselves tabernacles, and serve this great King of hearts in the obedience of faith, so that we may at last be transferred to the

heavenly Jerusalem. O, the depth of the riches, of the wisdom, and of the knowledge of God! Of the riches of grace, since God, in spite of the unbelief and disobedience of his people, has not forgotten them, nor abrogated his covenant. Of the wisdom, which turns so many hindrances into the means of helping forward his own purposes. Of the knowledge which has foreseen and with absolute certainty has predicted all these things. Learn from Israel, the courageous trust thou mayest have in the mercy of God, even though thou shouldst lie beneath his heavy hand, as long as Jerusalem has lain in her ruins. Learn that the wisdom of God can never fail, nor be at fault, and yield thyself in all circumstances to his wise guidance. When something happens to thee unexpectedly, and destroys some hope which you may have fondly cherished, call to mind and consider the truth, that "known unto God are all his works from the foundation of the world."

[HENRY: It is promised that the Church shall be very happy. Three things are here promised it.

1. *Purity.* That is put last here as a reason for the rest (ver. 21). But we may consider it first as the ground and foundation of the rest. *I will cleanse, etc.*

2. *Plenty* (ver. 18). That is put first because it speaks the reverse of the judgment threatened in the foregoing chapters. The streams of this plenty overflow and enrich the land.

3. *Perpetuity.* This crowns all the rest. As one generation of professing Christians passes away, another shall come, in whom the throne of Christ shall endure forever.

ROBINSON: The last days are at hand, when the wicked shall be driven away in their wickedness, and a fiery deluge of wrath shall overwhelm the earth, but they who love the Lord shall be removed, as Lot, to a mountain of safety, and like Noah, be hidden in an ark of salvation, until the desolation and the tyranny be overpassed. Wherefore, dear Christian brethren, lift up your hearts, and long for his coming, for you shall be his in that day when He makes up his jewels.

Jesus, thy Church with longing eyes  
For thy expected coming waits;  
When will the promised light arise,  
And glory gleam from Zion's gates?

Teach us in watchfulness and prayer  
To wait for the appointed hour;  
And fit us by thy grace to share

The triumphs of thy conquering power. — F.]

PRAYER SUGGESTED BY THE WHOLE CHAPTER. — Great Saviour! we thank Thee that Thou wilt one day judge the enemies of Thy Church, and wilt recompense their persecutions and abominations on their own heads. Grant that their further wicked designs may not injure Thy Zion. Arise and punish them; deliver Thy faithful ones, and be their refuge and fortress amid the judgments which shall overtake the world of the ungodly. Adorn Thy Zion with the rich gifts of Thy Spirit that it may be holy before Thee, and ever overflow with spiritual blessings. Amen.











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