

The Book of Joel

from the book

Minor Prophets: Major Messages

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How To Use This Study Guide

1. A careful, unhurried reading of Joel is essential. Reading the chapter before looking at the notes, while working with the notes, and after finishing with the notes will give each researcher a powerful sense of the series of meanings within each chapter. It is important to be comfortable with all the names and places in the prophecy and to understand the announcements the prophet makes on behalf of the Lord. When possible, historical information will be included in the notes to increase reading comprehension and enhance application.
2. Our study of each chapter of Joel will begin with quotes from a work of the Writings called Summary Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms. This work includes a verse-by-verse overview of all three chapters of Joel that provides general information about the internal sense. Our research will help move us from the generals to the particulars of the internal sense.
3. Another important reference tool is Searle's General Index to Swedenborg's Scripture Quotations. This reference is used to find passages in the Writings where a verse(s) from the Word is either explained specifically or used to illustrate a doctrinal point that we can use in our study. There is also another use of this work. As we study, each researcher will be led by the Lord's Providence in myriad ways, according to specific needs or states. Knowing how to use this book will help each of us to explore relevant topics and look up related passages to increase our knowledge of the three-fold Word.
4. You will soon discover that not every verse, word, name, etc. is directly quoted in the Writings. But there are often other references to the same name, place, or thing in the explanation of a different verse of the Word. The hope is that reflection on these other doctrinal explanations will help us see possible applications to our study of Joel. We will need to use "derived doctrine" often. Please don't run away from this maligned term. If we use it properly and admit openly that it is derived doctrine, we bring no harm to the internal sense.
5. Keep some kind of notebook handy during your study times. Write out insights, questions, and any summaries you find helpful in organizing your thoughts about each chapter. The goal of this study guide is not to give a detailed summary of the internal sense but to start each researcher's quest for deeper insight.
6. At the end of each chapter in the study guide, you will find a study review. The review includes a summary of each section to help you reinforce and build on your understanding of several of the key points.
7. Begin each study unit with a devotional prayer asking the Lord to guide and direct your thoughts. Certainly, beginning in this sphere has the power to inspire and open our minds with a higher spiritual priority that will keep us in the company of the Lord's angels. As the Writings teach, we must seek to love truth for truth's sake. Such an approach will free each reader from

preconceived ideas that might limit his or her ability to "see" the intent and message of the Lord's Word.

Introduction

As we prepare to take up the study of *Joel*, let's pause for a moment and learn what we can about the historical prophet Joel. The six questions listed below will guide our quest for information.

1. What do we know about Joel?
2. Can we put Joel in a timeline with the other prophets?
3. Is Joel mentioned, or quoted, in any other books of the Word?
4. Are we familiar with any of the passages from *Joel*?
5. What are the major themes of Joel's prophecy?
6. And lastly, what specific lesson or lessons in Joel's prophecy are useful for the New Church?

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT JOEL?

Joel 1:1 reveals almost everything we know about this prophet. We know his name and the name of his father. Joel means "Yahweh is God." Some scholars note that the name Joel appears to be a combination of the two names of the Lord—Yahweh and Elohim.

Knowing the name of Joel's father, Pethuel, doesn't help us. Apparently, Pethuel was not a significant person in the history of Israel because there are no other references to him in the Word. We have no hint of what kind of life or work Joel did prior to his call from the Lord. Was he a priest? We don't know. Can we pinpoint where he lived in the land of Israel? Not really. Scholars assume that he lived in Jerusalem. Did the Lord call him from royal, priestly, or common stock? Was Joel, like Amos, a man who was not one of the "sons of the prophets"? There are no answers to these questions.

From a New Church perspective, it seems to be of the Lord's Providence that we don't know Joel's personal history. It helps to keep us from focusing on the person to the detriment of our study of spiritual principles.

CAN WE PUT JOEL IN A TIMELINE WITH THE OTHER PROPHETS?

No! Scholars are undecided about the dates of Joel's birth and death, and about what king or kings reigned at the time of his prophetic calling. Among scholars, there is very little agreement on the years of Joel's prophecy:

- One theory proposes that he lived during King Jehoshaphat's reign: 872-848 BC.
- Another suggestion is that he lived during the period 792-740 BC.
- A third suggestion places him at 597-587 BC.
- And the last scholarly opinion has Joel living around 515-500 BC.

Why are these "guesses" so diverse? Joel's prophecy gives no historical clues. He mentions no king. We are left only with "the timeless message of the Lord."

Again, we do well to ask why the Lord would keep the dateline so unclear. Is it to keep our minds steady and focused on the spiritual sense and not on people, places, and time/space concepts? I think we would agree that this seems to be a good reason for a vague timeline. We shouldn't try to put the Word of the Lord in a finite context. We shouldn't worry if we can't make God conform to our spatial concepts. The Word is the Lord's, and it has been preserved so that it may be studied to eternity. Angels don't read names or dates. They behold the spiritual sense and draw on the illustrations (immediate influx) that come from the Lord. We need to remember to emulate this approach as a goal while reading the Word.

IS JOEL MENTIONED OR QUOTED IN ANY OF THE BOOKS OF THE WORD?

There are twelve references to a "Joel" listed in *Young's Bible Concordance*. Most of the twelve references to "Joel" occur in *First and Second Chronicles* and *Nehemiah (11:9)*, which are not books of the Word. There is one reference to Joel in *Acts 2:16*. The only reference to a "Joel" in the Word occurs in *I Samuel 8:2*.

Here is a list of the places a "Joel" is mentioned in the Old Testament:

1. The eldest son of Samuel was named Joel (*I Samuel 8:2*). This son of Samuel is also mentioned in *I Chronicles 6:28, 33, and 15:17*.
2. *I Chronicles 6:36* mentions a Levite priest named Joel.
3. *I Chronicles 4:35* identifies a chieftain of the tribe of Simeon named Joel.
4. An early leader in the tribe of Reuben was named Joel (*I Chronicles 5:4, 8*).
5. A chieftain of the tribe of Gad was named Joel (*I Chronicles 5:12*).

6. A chieftain of the tribe of Issachar was named Joel (*I Chronicles 7:3*).
7. Joel, the brother of Nathan, was a tough hero in David's army (*I Chronicles 11:38*).
8. A Levite of the Gershon tribe was named Joel (*I Chronicles 15:7, 11*).
9. A Levite, the son of Ladan, was named Joel (*I Chronicles 23:8 and 26:22*).
10. A Levite, the son of Azariah, was named Joel (*II Chronicles 29:12*).
11. There was a son of Pedaiah, who ruled over half of the tribe of Manasseh, named Joel (*I Chronicles 27:20*).
12. A son of Zichri, of the tribe of Benjamin, was named Joel (*Nehemiah 11:9*).

Acts 2:16 quotes *Joel 2:28-32*.

ARE WE FAMILIAR WITH ANY OF THE PASSAGES FROM JOEL?

You will probably recognize more passages than you would imagine. I have listed here what I think are the major ones you have heard most often in our church services:

1. **Joel 2:12-13:** "Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and mourning. So rend your heart, and not your garments; return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness..."
2. **Joel 2:28:** "I will pour out My spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions..."
3. **Joel 2:31:** "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood..."
4. **Joel 3:10:** "Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears..."

This fourth passage in *Joel* is the opposite of *Isaiah 2:4* and *Micah 4:3*: "They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks..."

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR THEMES OF JOEL'S PROPHECY?

1. The sensual person has destroyed the church.

2. The Word has been scattered and stripped of its spiritual dignity.
3. The Word has been falsified.
4. Spiritual insanity reigns among the people of the dying church.
5. The day of the Lord is coming.
6. The day of judgment is coming, and there will be a great battle.
7. The Lord calls for repentance.
8. Sincere repentance will save the people (remnant).
9. The Lord will establish a new church.
10. The Lord offers acquittal to those who turn from their wrongful ways.
11. The people should be aware and respond; the Day of the Lord is here.
12. There will be a new illustration of the Word. People will see how the Word applies to their lives.
13. When this comes to pass, the church **will be the Lord's** and the church **will be from the Word**.

AND LASTLY, WHAT SPECIFIC LESSON OR LESSONS IN JOEL'S PROPHECY ARE USEFUL FOR THE NEW CHURCH?

All too often, we worry about the slow growth of the New Church. Why isn't the General Church membership in the thousands or millions? Why are other faith groups doing so much better? Is the spread of the Lord's New Church on earth ever going to happen?

This nagging worry distresses us with a vague feeling that maybe we are "hitching our spiritual wagon" to a dying cause. The teaching of *Joel* is a pep talk. It contains a message of hope. The Lord is going to establish the church. He will win the spiritual war that is going to be waged. The New Church will be His, and His Word will catch hold of the world. But, there must be a consummation of the falsity that is still in our world. The sensual side of humanity is still very much alive. The sensual is impatient with the Lord. Looking beyond the moment is not an interest of the sensual person. The emphasis on faith alone or knowledge alone is an enemy of the conjugal principles of the Lord's Church. These things temporarily disperse the ideas of the Lord. The locust attack mentioned in Joel depicts wave after wave of sensual

philosophical and scientific arguments against the church. It appears that they have stripped the church and the doctrines of the Lord barren.

In Joel's prophecy, we hear this message: "Stay alert! Respond, for the Day of the Lord is at hand. Don't lose sight of the end. The New Church is the Lord's, and His Word will be the core of the Church."

Will it happen? Will the battle bring victory to the Church? The prophecy of Joel preaches a positive end. It will come, and the Lord will gather His "remnant" together to start a church that will be the crown of all churches for ever and ever.

These things will come about because of the Lord, not the efforts of any group of people. So we need to be watchful and listen for the spiritual trumpet of the Lord. Hell and its menacing legions will not overcome the Lord. The Church will win, not because of our strength but because of the Lord's strength.

Joel 3:10 has a teaching worth remembering and saying to ourselves often:

"Let the weak say, 'I am strong.'"

I hope you read *Joel* with this sense of victory and strength in "the Day of the Lord."

Chapter One

JOEL 1:1-3

"The word of the Lord that came to Joel the son of Pethuel. 'Hear this, you elders, and give ear, all you inhabitants of the land! Has anything like this happened in your days, or even in the days of your fathers? Tell your children about it, let your children tell their children, and their children another generation.'"

Passages From The Writings

Summary Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms (P&P)

- "To all who are of the church."

Derived Doctrine

"The word of the Lord..."

- *Arcana Coelestia (AC) 2* explains the nature of the Lord's Word. "...of necessity [the Word must] contain within it such things as belong **to heaven, to the church, and to religious belief**...unless it did so it could not be called the Lord's Word, nor could it be said to have any life in it" (emphasis added).
- *AC 129* teaches us, "the true order is for man to be wise from the Lord, that is, from His Word, and then all things follow, and he is enlightened even in matters of reason and of memory—knowledges..."

"...that came to Joel the son of Pethuel."

- "Coming" or "came" signifies communication by influx (*AC 5249*). What kind of influx is meant here? Was it "mediate" or "immediate"? The passage identifies the Word of the Lord coming to Joel; thus, it seems sensible to decide this refers to immediate influx because **that which comes directly from the Lord** involves **immediate influx**. Mediate influx, on the other hand, refers to that which comes through angels or some other indirect means.
- We have not a single teaching about the meaning or correspondence of "Pethuel." A New Church minister, the Rev. James Hyde, wrote: "The name Pethuel is derived from "pathu", which means 'induced,'...To induce signifies, in a bad sense, to entice, or beget a deceptive infatuation." (*An Exposition of the Prophecy of Joel, pages 47-48.*)
- Joel's name means "Jehovah is God." Looking at the meanings of these two names (Joel and "pathu") in a positive light, could they signify that the Lord

wanted to positively induce and entice the people to have a true "infatuation" with His Word?

- A "son" signifies a general truth (AC 3496). Sons signify those not born within the church, or nations who are remote from goods and truths and who have not been inculcated with the goods and truths of faith; sons also signify those who are in external worship (Apocalypse Explained [AE] 1133 [3]).

"Hear this, you elders, and give ear, all you inhabitants of the land!"

- To "hear" means to be in a state of obedience (AC 2691). Hearing signifies that one who understands should obey what the Word teaches. Hearing means to both perceive and obey. See *Apocalypse Revealed (AR) 87* and *AE 588*.
- "Elders" signify those who are wise and in a wisdom that agrees with good (AC 5608 [7] and AC 6524).
- To "give ear" signifies that one who understands should obey what the Word teaches so that he or she might be made ready to be of the New Church, which is the New Jerusalem (AR 87).
- "Inhabitants of the world" signify people of the church who are in the goods of doctrine, and so of life (AE 741 [6]). "Land" signifies the region where the church is—where the faith of the church resides (AC 2571).

"Has anything like this happened in your days, or even in the days of your fathers?"

- Questions are asked by the Lord to help us to seek either knowledge or confirmation (AC 1913 and AC 2693).
- The people of Judah experienced a devastating drought and a locust plague that stripped the land of its vegetation. The question asks the reader to reflect. Was this event simply "bad luck"? Was this a natural misfortune, or was it a significant happening of divine (providential) proportions?
- "Your days" signify a kind of review or assessment of the successive states of regeneration (AC 6). "Days" and "years," in the Word, signify the states of life (Heaven and Hell [HH] 155).
- What about the "days of your fathers"? Could this question be a mandate to Judah to review the inherited tendencies toward evil they received from the present and prior churches? Could it be that the Lord wanted them to think about the inherited tendencies toward **evil** they had passed on? The question could also suggest that they should review the inherited tendencies toward **good** they received from the churches of their fathers. Both are important points to reflect on when considering the Lord's providential leading.

"Tell your children about it, let your children tell their children, and their children another generation."

- AC 2862 explains that "telling" signifies to indicate, to come to know, to inform, or to be informed. Reflection is also an internal telling.

- "Children" signify bringing forth things that belong to one's spiritual life (*AR 534*). Offspring have birth from the marriage of the Lord with His church. Children are the offspring of goods and truths (*Conjugal Love [CL] 121*).
- A "generation" signifies those who are perpetually being created anew (*AC 1041*).
- Does this teaching about perpetually being created anew seem to apply to the meaning and process of children telling children?

Putting It All Together

To begin putting all of these ideas together, it is important that we look at the contrast within two passages relating to the three verses of *Joel* we are studying. First, let's look at the quote from *P&P* that proclaims that this is a message:

- "To all who are in the church."

Secondly, let's look at the question Joel asks:

- "Has anything like this happened in your days, or even in the days of your fathers?"

P&P directs the reader's attention to the inclusiveness of the Lord's message: "**To all who are in the church.**" The Lord's reaching out to **all** shouldn't be missed. The Divine cares about **all** in the church. The Lord invites **all** to listen to His Word. Joel's name means "Jehovah is God"; therefore, **all** need to have the ears of obedience for the things of the Lord. The Lord calls **all** to His Word because it contains and offers things that belong **to heaven**. His Word offers things that are essential for **the church**. The Word is vital for our system of **religious beliefs**. Seeking the Lord through the Word opens the way for the powerful sphere of immediate influx. The Lord will give "obedient ears" the vital, intuitive insights needed to thrive spiritually. Within the heart of every believer, there has to be some inducement, enticement, and infatuation (love) for the Word. Joel, "Jehovah is God," calls for the "elders," or the wisdom of the mind, to teach and improve the understanding within the church so the people can respond obediently. The elders represent the degree of wisdom that readies a willing worshipper to become a member of the New Church—the New Jerusalem.

Choosing the Lord's way will open to us a life that is peaceful, productive, and happy. Casting the Lord off invites and prepares the way for unbelievable spiritual disasters, the magnitude of which has never been seen before, nor can they be described. Hence we have the catastrophic story and frightening events alluded to in the second quote: "**Has anything like this happened in your days, or even in the days of your fathers?**" What natural and spiritual events did Joel point to? Joel describes four kinds of locust, one after another, swarming and entering the land to consume all the vegetation therein. In effect, Joel asks: Can you believe the travesty

of this experience? Tell this story so as to warn the generations of children to come. It is a story of vital importance. **"HEAR"** is the first command following Joel's lineage. Hearing requires a willingness to obey.

The full extent of this locust message is covered in our next section.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 1:1-3*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Did you notice how much we needed derived doctrine to help give us a larger glimpse of the spiritual sense of the first three verses? What did you think of this?
2. Are you clear on the point of the two contrasting passages? Obedience means giving ear to the Lord and His Word. Ignoring the Lord and His Word brings about spiritual calamities of unbelievable proportions. Can you think of any personal examples of these life states?
3. Can you describe the difference between immediate influx and mediate influx?
4. What did you think about the point of Joel's father's name being a derivative of a word meaning inducement, enticement, and infatuation? Can you see the possibilities of these inherited tendencies, if they are tendencies toward good, being a part of the Lord's working through Joel?
5. How well do we do our job of telling the generations of our children about the effects of our choices? Is it enough to count on our New Church school system to do it for us?
6. Think of the song, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do and hear." Ever wonder why the doing occurs before the hearing? What are your thoughts about this?
7. The word "elders" can have a wide range of meaning. Elders signify truths of wisdom learned. They can be the remains built up and protected by the Lord. The elders are caregivers for the preparation and building of the New Church. Do we listen to them often enough? What can they offer us?

8. New ideas are great. Our scientific achievements have given us longevity and greater freedom. Have we brought new ideas into our hearts and mind to augment or complement the elders?

JOEL 1:4

"What the chewing locust left, the swarming locust has eaten; what the swarming locust left, the crawling locust has eaten; and what the crawling locust left, the consuming locust has eaten."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Falsity from the sensual man and afterwards evil therefrom has consumed all things of the church."

AC 7643 [7]

- "In Joel...1:4...'locust' denotes falsity in the extremes vastating truths and goods."

AC 7643 [8]

- "...by 'locust' are signified reasonings from fallacies and the falsities thence derived, also confirmed by philosophical things. Thus also by the 'locust' are signified the falsities which are in the extremes with man, and which are more earthly and corporeal than all other falsities; and by which man may be easily deceived and seduced, for he apprehends what is obvious to the senses, and with difficulty what is opposed to the senses."

AC 9331 [5]

- In *Joel 1:4* "...falsities and evils in the extremes—that is, in the external sensuous of the man of the church—are signified by the various kinds of insects here mentioned...for the subject treated of is the perversion of the truth and good of the church."

AR 424

- "It is in consequence of falsities in the outermost parts consuming the truths and goods of the church, as they spring up in man, that they are signified by 'locusts,' which consume the grass and the herbs of the fields, as may be evident from these passages..." *Joel 1:4* is cited.

AE 543 [9]

- "The 'locust' and the 'caterpillar' have a similar signification in Joel 1:4... Evidently these noxious little animals signify falsities and evils devastating or consuming truths and goods with the man of the church..."

Derived Doctrine

"What the chewing locust left..."

- "Chewing" signifies taking knowledges from the memory and analyzing them (*Divine Providence [DP] 233 [8]*). Chewing the cud signifies thinking over things once learned and believed (*AC 5135 [2]*).
- *AR 794* teaches that "them that are left" represent those "who do not search after [truths] nor receive them, because they are in falsities..."

"...the swarming locust has eaten..."

- *AC 2122* describes the state of those who desire to become "the greatest." They think of nothing but what is filthy, obscene, and profane. They make nothing of and utterly despise all things that are of charity and faith. They do not acknowledge the Lord. They hate all who confess the Lord. These descriptions are followed by this statement: "At the present day such people flock [swarm] into the other life..."
- "Swarming" in the positive sense refers to goods, multiplying to truths (*AC 1014 and 1016*).
- To be "eaten" signifies to communicate, be conjoined, and to appropriate (*AC 2343*).
- In the negative sense, to "eat" signifies to live for self and the world and thus to appropriate evils and falsities (*AE 840 [5]*).

"What the swarming locust left, the crawling locust has eaten..."

- "Crawling" signifies pleasures from the senses. When such pleasures originate from the proprium and lusts, the senses become filthy (*AC 594*).
- That which crawls signifies things belonging to the sensuous part of a person, which, when separated from the spiritual part, become falsities from evils (*AE 556 [6]*).

"...and what the crawling locust left, the consuming locust has eaten."

- "...the consuming locust has eaten" has been translated in the *New English Bible* as "the consuming locust has put an end to." The *Revised Standard Version* translates "consuming locust" as "destroying locust." The *Jerusalem Bible* translates "consuming locust" as the "shearer" locust.

- *AC 10431* explains that "consuming" represents what happens to people when they turn away from the Lord. Such a turning away from the Lord is "consuming" in that people who turn away "perish in consequence of their evil."

NB: in the *King James Bible*, the four kinds of locust are called **the palmerworm, the locust, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar**. What representations are given in the Writings for these insects?

- *AE 403* explains that "palmerworms" signify falsity destroying good.
- *AE 573 [15]* speaks of these "noxious little animals, 'the locust, the canker-worm, the caterpillar, and the palmer-worm,' signifying falsities and evils that devastate or consume the truths and goods of the church..."
- Biblical scholars write about these four "noxious" insects as **the gnawers, the swarmers or multipliers, the lickers, and the consumers or devourers**.

Putting It All Together

P&P starts us on the path to understanding this verse. It is not a historical prophecy about four nations attacking Israel in the future. Instead, it is an eternal prophecy about what happens to a person whose heart and mind are focused wholly on the things of this world. The Writings call this kind of person the "Sensual Man." This sensual person doesn't think deeply about the Word. His or her life is occupied with values that have no extension into the spiritual world. The sensual person looks for ease, comfort, and immediate gratification, and, in reality, is angry with the Lord. The sensual person is not willing to look beyond the grave.

Following the Lord involves pursuing infinite and eternal goals. Human life involves the here and now (time and space). In the process of growing spiritually, we learn how to bring our time-and-space existence into harmony with the infinite and eternal things of the Lord.

What little spiritual knowledge is known by the sensual person is, at best, fragmented, chaotic, and vulnerable to myriad philosophic, scientific, and self-centered arguments. Without the inner sense of the Word, the heart of an individual, the church, is susceptible to devastating attacks from the "gnawers," the "swarmers," the "lickers," and the "consumers" that deprive the church of its "vegetables." Vegetables are not only beautiful and nourishing but represent the variety of celestial and spiritual things flowing from the Lord into our natural life. (See *AC 1632* for more on the meaning of vegetation.) Obviously, hell wants to consume such things to remove them from our minds.

Joel's prophecy helps us to mentally picture how myriad spiritual locusts may darken the Lord's sunlight. The beating of their wings is like a storm of sensual

controversy trying to confuse the minds of the Lord's people when they try to think of His truths. Imagine wave after wave of spiritual locusts feverishly and ravenously gorging themselves to the point of destroying a person's spiritual crop of hope. Such is the effect within the hearts of those who are disinterested in the Lord and His Word.

This is a story we need to hear so we can alertly fight off periods of spiritual lethargy. The plague of the heart and mind is a reality hell wants us to face. The Word gives us an admonition to speak to the generation of children and our children's children. We are to explain to them the devastating effects of the "sensual man." How do we warn them and ourselves about the unbelievable effects of the locust? How do we prudently tell this story to our children and their children? *AC 2862* reminds us that **reflection and perception** are to be the tools and means of unfolding the internal sense of the Word. We need to teach everyone ways to observe and shun the disorders of hell. What better way than through the prophecy of Joel and the stories of the Word? Let's close this summary by reading again the words of *AC 2862*: "...**reflection and perception is an internal telling and saying.**" One way we are to be useful is by sharing the Word of the Lord and facilitating good and useful discussion about "survival" techniques that will protect us against the marauding noxious pests of hell. How can we frame a discussion of life issues in the context of warning one another about the effects of the locust? **Doesn't this section do a good job describing the kinds of sensual damage that self-love out of control can have on our spiritual growth? "Has anything like this happened in your days, or even in the days of your fathers?"**

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 1:4*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Can you see how those who are outside of the New Church might assume this is a prophecy about four nations attacking Israel?
2. Have you ever experienced or witnessed a swarming of ideas attacking something spiritual within you or someone else? What can you tell us about it?
3. Do you remember the purpose of the attack? To block out the sun; to devastate the vegetable kingdom, and to strip it of any vital life or fruit. What does this mean in practical terms?

4. Sensual people may have a clear self-image, but they often do not argue from fixed doctrine. Like the wind, they attack from one point and, if things are not progressing well on that front, they change direction. They see themselves as quite flexible or adaptable to theories or points of view. Sensual people charge spiritual people with being fixed, staid, and out of touch with reality. Sensual people view themselves as vibrant and agile. To them, the spiritual person is weak, sickly, and guilt-ridden. Can you attest to sensing or hearing any of these charges in your life as you seek to grow spiritually? Do you know what the Lord answers to the sensual people regarding who is healthy and full of life?
5. I once heard a lecture wherein the speaker said that the toughest things in life are not the major problems that we face. Somehow, we seem to rise to the occasion and bravely survive. His point was that we suffer more under the daily little "pin-pricks" of life, the little gnawing, biting, distracting events we face all day long. These little pinpricks fray our nerves and put us out of sorts. These are the things that bring us to snap at people we love. Do the little things seem like the gathering of a swarming enemy? How are life's pinpricks like noxious insects chewing away at our patience and good nature?
6. We have asked ourselves this question often: How can we get serious about reading the Word? How can we put away our sensual side and develop our spiritual nature? Is this passage in *Joel* helpful? Does it paint a picture of unbelievable devastation to the "crops" within our mind? What crops are especially at risk?
7. What did you make of the four kinds of locust? What did the "gnawers," the "swarmers," the "lickers," and the "consumers" add to your mental picture of the hells and the "sensual man"?
8. The Lord gives us some strong images to think about. How do these rank among the many others we have in our minds? What are some of your favorite images from the Word?

JOEL 1:5-7

"Awake, you drunkards, and weep; and wail, all you drinkers of wine, because of the new wine, for it has been cut off from your mouth. For a nation has come up against My land, strong, and without number; his teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he has the fangs of a fierce lion. He has laid waste My vine, and ruined My fig tree; he has stripped it bare and thrown it away; its branches are made white."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Let them repent, for evil from the sensual man has destroyed the different things of the church."

AC 1072 [3 & 4]

- "A 'drunken man'...denotes those who desire, from memory-knowledges (scientific), to investigate spiritual and celestial things...In Joel 5-7... [drunken is] said of the church when devastated as to the truths of faith." Further on in this number, there is a passage teaching that "'drunken men' think themselves more wide awake than others, but they are in deep sleep."

AR 721

- "That 'to be made drunk with...wine' signifies to be insane in spiritual things, may indeed be seen without confirmation from other passages in the Word; but as many are not able to see this, on account of their not thinking spiritually but sensually, that is, materially...I will adduce some passages from the Word..." *Joel 1:5-7* is cited.

AE 376 [36]

- "'Drunkenness'...in the Word signifies insanity in spiritual things, and lapsing into errors..." *Joel 1:5, 6, and 7* are cited.

AC 3580 [6]

- *Joel 1:5* and *10* are cited with a very simple explanation: "...where a new church is treated of..."

AR 316

- *Joel 1:5, 10, and 11* are cited with the following statement: "Nearly the same words occur in Hosea 9:2, 3; Zephaniah 1:13; Lamentations 2:11, 12; Micah 6:15; Amos 5:11; Isaiah 24:6, 7, 9, 11."

AE 376 [18]

- "In *Joel 1:5, 10, 11*...[These words treat of] a devastated church, in which goods and truths have perished."

AC 6367

- "...a 'lion' denotes the power possessed by the evil of the love of self when it destroys and lays waste; and so in...*Joel 1:6*..."

AC 9052 [4]

- "In Joel 1:6, 7...'teeth' and 'grinders' denote the falsities that destroy the truths of the church; a 'vine' denotes the spiritual church...and a 'fig-tree' its natural good...That 'teeth' have this signification is plain also from the fact that they are attributed to a nation which will lay waste."

AR 435

- "...the sensual things of the understanding are signified by 'teeth;'...Sensual men who are in falsities from confirmation, seem to themselves to be in power over all things, so they cannot be conquered...That 'teeth' signify the ultimates of man's life, which are called sensual things, and which, when separated from the interiors of the mind, are in mere falsities, and do violence to truths even to destroying them, may appear from the following passages..."*Joel 1:6* is cited.

AE 278 [11]

- "'Lions' in the Word signify also the power of falsity from evil by which the church is destroyed and devastated." *Joel 1:6* and *7* are cited as an example.

AE 556 [4]

- "In Joel 1:6 and 7 'A nation that cometh up upon the land' signifies evil devastating the church, 'nation' meaning evil, and 'land' the church; 'vigorous and without number' signifies powerful and manifold; 'vigorous' is predicated of the power of evil, and 'without number' of the power of falsity; 'its teeth are the teeth of a lion' signifying destroying falsities; 'the jaw teeth of an immense lion' signify truths falsified; 'it reduced the vine to a waste, and the fig-tree to froth,' signifies the destruction of spiritual and natural truths; spiritual truths are those of the spiritual sense of the Word, and natural truths those of the sense of its letter...'Teeth' properly signify such things as are merely in the memory and are brought forth therefrom, for the things that are in the memory of the sensual man correspond to bones and teeth."

AC 5113 [13]

- "...a 'vine' signifies the good of the intellectual part; and a 'fig-tree' the good of the natural man, or what is the same, that a 'vine' signifies the good of the interior man, and a 'fig-tree' the good of the exterior man, therefore a 'fig-tree' is often mentioned in the Word at the same time as a 'vine;' as in the following passages..." *Joel 1:6, 7, and 12* are cited as examples.

AE 403 [6]

- "In Joel 1:6, 7, 12...This whole chapter treats of the devastated church; and 'the nation that comes up upon the land, vigorous and without number, having the teeth of a lion, and the cheek-teeth of an immense lion,' does not signify any such nation, but direful evil and falsity therefrom; 'the land upon which it comes up' signifies the church; 'the teeth of a lion' signify the falsities of such evil; and because these destroy all the goods and truths of the church, they are called 'the teeth of the lion and the great cheek-teeth of a lion,' 'lion' signifying [falsity] which destroys. Therefore, 'it hath made My vine a waste, and my fig-tree foam,' signifies that the church internal and external is thereby vastated, 'vine' signifying the internal church, and 'fig-tree' the external, 'foam' signifying where there is inwardly no truth; 'in stripping it hath stripped it, and cast it away' signifies that there is no longer any good or truth that is not destroyed, 'to strip' that is, of fruits and leaves, means of goods and truths, and 'to cast away' means to destroy entirely; 'the branches thereof are made white' signifies that there is no longer anything spiritual..."

Derived Doctrine

"Awake..."

- To "awake" (wake from sleep) signifies to seek enlightenment; sleep refers to an obscure state in comparison to being awake (*AC 3715*).
- To be awake signifies enlightenment in the natural (external) part of a person (*AC 5208*).
- To be awake implies a state of watchfulness to know truths and to live by them (*AR 158*).

"...you drunkards, and weep; and wail, all you drinkers of wine..."

- To be drunken, staggering, and reeling signifies to be insane in spiritual things from falsifying the truths of the Word (*AC 1072*).
- A person staggering or reeling signifies those who can see nothing of truth when they read or hear truth from the Word, particularly when spiritual things seek to inflow into the natural (*AE 376 [32]*).
- *AR 788* gives us an insight into the meaning of "weep" and "wail." "...by 'weeping' is signified mourning of soul, and by 'mourning' [wailing] grief of heart." In other words, this is a call for a new understanding and will.
- Drinking in the good sense signifies appropriating instruction in spiritual things (*AC 2704*). Drinking in the negative sense signifies appropriating falsified truths in one's life (*AR 635*).
- Drinking wine in the positive sense signifies seeking instruction in the things of the Lord's Divine truth—Divine wisdom. Such is the goal when receiving wine in the Holy Supper. See *True Christian Religion (TCR) 711*.

"...because of the new wine, for it has been cut off from your mouth."

- Reading this verse reminds us of the Lord's sayings to His people. "You have heard it said of old...but I say unto you..." The Lord's life, teachings, and examples brought new wine—truth—to the world. Some took and drank the new truth. Others cut it off, rejecting it and spewing it from their mouths.
- To "cut off" signifies that divine truth shall be taken from that people, but shall live again in a new church (*AE 315 [23]*).
- "Mouth" signifies thought from the understanding (*DP 80*). *AE 782* carries this correspondence a little further, explaining that the mouth signifies thought as it comes forth in speech such as teaching, preaching, and reasoning.

"For a nation has come up against My land, strong, and without number..."

- "Nations from afar" signify falsity from evil, or that of the sensuous man, destroying truths (*AE 724 [27]*).
- "Nations" signify evils of the will (*AC 622*).
- In the positive sense, "nation" signifies the Lord's kingdom (*AC 1416 [5]*).
- "Against" signifies the violence hell offers against the Lord's spiritual kingdom, until, by the Lord's divine power, it is brought under His yoke (*AC 8625*).
- "My land..." "Land" represents various things: the internal man of the church; the region where the church is; the church itself; the doctrine of love and charity where the church resides (*AC 2571*). "My" makes it clear that the opposition from hell will come up against the Lord's church and not some physical or historical church.
- "Strong," or strength, in the positive sense represents truth, which cannot be resisted (*AC 426 [3]*).
- "Strong" in the negative sense represents the gathering or marshaling of the forces within the evil of the love of self (*AC 6306 [4]*).
- "Without number" in the positive sense represents a setting in order (*AC 10218*). It also signifies what cannot be counted, or multiplication to eternity (*AC 1610*).
- In the negative sense, "number" signifies the attempt of hell to dissipate the divine truths by reasonings and falsities. Such was the "number" that attacked the Lord in temptation. See *AC 3812 [7]*.

"His teeth are the teeth of a lion..."

- *AR 435* gives us the most direct teaching about the meaning of these words. It states that "the teeth of a lion" represent sensual men who are in falsities and **believe** themselves to be in **power over all things, so they imagine they cannot be conquered.**

- *AE 278 [11]* teaches that a "lion" signifies the power of falsity that attempts to destroy and devastate the church.

"...and he has the fangs of a fierce lion."

- "Fierce" signifies a strong aversion from good (*AC 6358*).
- "Fierce" signifies that the people turned from divine things. For when wrath or anger is said of the Lord, it means a turning away on the part of human beings (*AC 10431*).
- "Fang" as a verb means to seize, to lay hold of. As a noun, a "fang" is also a long sharp tooth by which the prey is seized and held. Although we don't have any specific correspondence given for "fang," we can draw certain conclusions about the nature of hell. It wants to seize, hold, and trap spiritual people so as to tear and destroy them.

"He has laid waste My vine, and ruined My fig tree..."

- "Waste" signifies evils and falsities destroying the good and truth of the church (*AE 374 [5]*).
- "My vine" and "My fig tree" signify, respectively, the goods of the intellectual principle and the good of the natural principle, or the good of the interior man and the good of the exterior man (*AC 5113*). The "My" word calls our attention to the Lord. His Divine principles seek to help the interior and exterior life of human beings.

"...he has stripped it bare and thrown it away; its branches are made white."

- Stripping signifies dispelling and annihilating the appearances of truth (*AC 4741*).
- To "strip" signifies deprivation of divine truth in the externals (*AC 10542*).
- "Bare" seems to be equivalent to the word "naked" in this verse. To get help with these terms, let's turn to *AC 213*. In reference to the story in which Adam and Eve claimed nakedness as a problem, we read "where there is no innocence, nakedness is a scandal and disgrace, because it is attended with a consciousness of thinking evil...and is predicated of a perverted church..." Could "he" (the hells) purposely have aimed at the innocence of the church so as to make it appear as a scandal and disgrace?
- Does the phrase "branches made white" mean that the bark was stripped off? What use does the bark provide for a tree? Not only does its tough external covering protect the tree from the elements, but it has a part in the flow of sap and the supply of life. Girdle a tree, and its death is imminent. Can we make an equal point for the spiritual meaning of this verse? "Branches" signify the power of truth from good. The "fig tree" is the good of the natural and the branch its affection. See *AC 4231*.

- "...stripped...bare...thrown away." Each of these words convey within their meaning a sense of a wasted potential. What could have been productive was treated carelessly; thus, instead of use, there is despair and destruction. *AC 2121* exposes who really throws things away. "The Lord casts no one into hell, but every one casts himself there."

Putting It All Together

The hallmark of this section comes when the Lord calls His people to **wake up**. They not only failed to see dangerous issues, but their sleep-like state made them vulnerable to the stealthy plans of the enemies of the Lord. The parable of the wheat and darnel illustrates this principle quite well.

Secondly, the Lord told them they were drunkards. Drunkenness represents being insane with foolish ideas of how smart and powerful they were. Like staggering, reeling, and unstable minds, they needed to sober up with the reality of the Lord's eternal truths.

If they woke up, if they sobered up, they would see the need to weep and mourn over the foolishness they had previously allowed to direct their lives. Instead of drinking the wine of the sensual person, they were to drink of the wine provided by the Lord. The Lord's drink quenches the thirst of the soul and brings with it necessary instruction and a new (living) will and understanding.

The Lord's way benefits the weak and the heavy-laden. He promises to make our burden light. The lightness comes from the fact that He wills to help us. Refusing His offer of help leads us into states of despair. Listen to what is forecast: A nation that is strong and without number will rise up against you. The enemy will bare its fangs. Like a fierce lion, its teeth will seize, tear, and waste us. The land, the church, will be wasted. The truth of the church will mean nothing. Obedience, the fig tree, will be stripped bare, stripped of its bark and thrown away.

Surely the awakened, repentant, sorrowful soul will avoid all of these direful consequences. And how will this happen? **Alertness, soberness, attentiveness** will allow and help us to bear spiritual fruit. The branches of the fig trees will not be stripped and made white with the gnawing away of the bark. There will be no throwing away; instead, there will be a gathering and building up of uses for the Lord and the neighbor.

What key words should we remember from this section? AWAKE; SOBER UP, WEEP, AND WAIL. These things will be sufficient in the day of the Lord and will rescue His church from the reeling, staggering effects of self-love.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 1:5-7*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. If you have children, think about how you warn them of dangers. How do you go about it? Do you work with their imagination, using illustrations of contrasts? Do you sometimes let them fail so they can learn the necessity of asking for help?
2. What can you relate about a significant incident in your life in which you can admit that you "fell asleep at the switch" and made yourself vulnerable to the enemy sowing seeds of discord in your life?
3. How well can you relate to the idea of the fangs of hell grabbing and tearing away at essential spiritual issues?
4. What are your thoughts about the stripping of the branches and the throwing away described in our text? What does this look like in every-day life?

JOEL 1:8-13

"Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth. The grain offering and the drink offering have been cut off from the house of the Lord; the priests mourn, who minister to the Lord. The field is wasted, the land mourns; for the grain is ruined, the new wine is dried up, the oil fails. Be ashamed, you farmers, wail, you vinedressers, for the wheat and the barley; because the harvest of the field has perished. The vine has dried up, and the fig tree has withered; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree—all the trees of the field are withered; surely joy has withered away from the sons of men. Gird yourselves and lament, you priests; wail, you who minister before the altar; come, lie all night in sackcloth, you who minister to my God; for the grain offering and drink offering are withheld from the house of your God."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Mourning over the destruction of the goods and truths of the church."

AE 863 [15]

- "...‘virgins’ signify in the Word the affections of truth..." *Joel 1:7-8* is cited.

AR 334

- "The reason why ‘a fig-tree’ signifies the natural good of man, is because every tree signifies something of the church in man...In confirmation are these passages..." *Joel 1:7* and *12* are cited.

AR 620

- "That all they who are such in the Lord’s church, whether they be virgins or young men, wives or husbands, boys or old men, girls or old women, are meant by ‘virgins,’ may appear from the Word, where virgins are mentioned..." *Joel 1:8* is cited.

AR 492

- "That mourning on account of the devastation of truth in the church, was represented by ‘putting on sackcloth,’ may be seen from the following passages..." *Joel 1:8* and *13* are cited.

AE 637 [14]

- "In Joel...‘to be girded with sackcloth’ and to ‘pass the night in sackcloth’ signify mourning because the good and truth of the church are destroyed, for the ‘meal-offering’ signifies the good of the church, and the ‘drink-offering’ its truth."

AR 778

- "That ‘wine’ signifies truth from the good of love...That ‘oil’ signifies the good of love...By ‘fine flour’ is signified celestial truth, and by ‘wheat’ is signified celestial good. That the truths and goods of worship are signified by ‘wine,’ ‘oil,’ ‘fine flour’ and ‘wheat,’ is because the drink-offerings and meal-offerings consisted of them, which were offered upon the altar together with the sacrifices; and by the sacrifices and by the offerings offered upon the altar worship is signified, for the chief part of worship consisted in them. That the drink-offerings, which were wine, were offered upon the altar together with the sacrifices, may be seen..." *Joel 1:9* is cited.

AE 376 [25]

- "This makes clear what is signified in Joel...1:9...namely, that worship from the good of love, and from the truths therefrom, had perished. Who cannot see that the meal-offering and the drink-offering, which were bread and wine, were not pleasing to Jehovah in worship, unless they had signified such things as are of heaven and the church?"

AR 589

- "That 'the world' also signifies the church, may be seen in...Joel 1:9, 10..."

AC 7602

- "...in Joel...1:9-11...the subject of this prophecy is the vastation of good and truth, as is evident from what follows in the chapter; and therefore by 'grain,' 'new wine,' 'wheat,' and 'barley,' are not signified these things, but spiritual things; thus by 'wheat,' interior good; and by 'barley,' exterior good."

AC 9295 [5]

- "In Joel...1:9-11...the vastation of the church in respect to the truths of faith and the goods of charity is here described by such things as belong to the field, the vineyard, and the olive yard; the church itself is 'the field;' and its last state, which was called by the Lord 'the consummation of the age, is 'the harvest.'"

AC 10137 [3 & 4]

- "That the 'meat-offering,' which was bread, signifies the good of love, and that the 'drink-offering,' which was wine, signifies the good of faith, and that they are so perceived by the angels, can be seen from all that is said in the Word... as in Joel...1:9-15...the subject here treated of is the last time of the church, when there is no longer in it the good of love and the truth of faith...From this it is plain that by 'the meat-offering and drink-offering which were cut off from the house of Jehovah,' by 'the field which was laid waste,' by 'the ground which mourned,' by 'the grain which was also laid waste,' by 'the new wine which was dried up,' by 'the oil which languisheth,' and by 'the vine' and 'the fig-tree,' are signified such things as belong to the church and heaven; but the internal sense teaches what these signify. From this it is evident that by 'the field' is signified the church as to the reception of truth...by 'the land,' the church as to good...by 'grain,' all the good of the church...by 'new wine' all the truth of the church...by 'oil' the good of love...by 'vine,' the interior good of the spiritual church...and by 'fig-tree' its exterior good..."

AC 566

- "And in Joel...1:10...it is evident that 'man,' who in the Hebrew tongue is called 'Adam,' from 'ground,' signifies the church."

AC 9780 [4]

- "...where 'the oil' denotes the good of love and charity, and 'the wine,' the good and truth of faith." *Joel 1:10* is cited.

AE 375 [30]

- "In Joel 1:10...This signifies the devastation of all things of the church which have reference in general to the good of love and the truth of faith; 'field,' and also 'ground,' mean the church, 'field' the church from the reception of truth, and 'ground' the church from the perception of good; 'corn' means everything of the church, 'new wine' truth, and 'fresh oil' good."

AC 3941 [4]

- "In Joel...1:10, 11, 13...the state of the vastated church is that which is here described; thus that 'field' and 'ground' are the church; the 'corn' its good, and the 'new wine' its truth...and that the 'wheat' is celestial love, and the 'barley' spiritual love; and as the state of the church is treated of, it is said, 'gird yourselves and lament, ye priests; howl, ye ministers of the altar:'"

AR 645

- "...by 'harvest' is signified the state of the church as to Divine truth; the reason is, because from the harvest grain is procured, from which bread is made, and by 'grain' and 'bread' is signified the good of the church, this being procured by truths. That this is the signification...may be seen more clearly from those places in the Word where 'harvest,' 'reaping'...are mentioned..." *Joel 1:10* is cited.

AE 911 [13]

- "In Joel...1:13...The devastation of the church as to good and truth is here meant by 'the harvest of the field hath perished;' 'husbandmen' mean those who are in the good of the church, and 'vinedressers' those who are in its truths; 'wheat and barley' mean good itself and truth itself; grief on account of devastation is signified by 'they were ashamed and howled.'"

AC 8369 [2]

- "That 'palm-trees' signified a holy festivity which is from good, is evident...in the following passages...Joel 1:12...here 'palm-tree' denotes good..."

AE 109 [4]

- "That 'trees,' which are so often mentioned in the Word, signify the interiors of man which belong to his mind and disposition, and the things that are on trees, as leaves and fruit, signify such things as are from these interiors, can be seen from the following passages..." *Joel 1:12* is cited.

AE 458 [7]

- "...Joel...1:12...describes the desolating of truth and good in the church, and thence of all joy of heart, that is, of all spiritual joy; for the 'vine' signifies the spiritual good and truth of the church, the 'fig-tree' the natural good and truth therefrom, and the 'pomegranate' sensual truth and good, which is the ultimate of the natural; 'palm' signifies joy of heart, from spiritual good, and 'apple' the same from the natural good derived from spiritual good; 'the trees of the field that are dried up,' signify the perceptions of good and the knowledges of truth, that there are none; and because spiritual joy and natural joy therefrom are signified by the 'palm-tree' and the 'apple tree,' it is added, 'joy is dried up from the sons of man;' 'sons of man' meaning in the Word those who are in truths from good, and 'joy' signifying spiritual joy, which is solely from good through truths. Who cannot see that vine, fig-tree, pomegranate, palm-tree, apple-tree, and the trees of the field are not here meant? Why should it be said in the Word and of what consequence is it to the church to say that these trees are withered and dried up?"

Derived Doctrine

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

- To "gird" signifies readiness to receive the influx of good and truth from the Lord, and to respond to it (*AC 7863*). To "gird with sackcloth" signifies mourning for destroyed good (*AC 4779 [8]*).
- A "virgin" signifies purity from all falsities (*AC 3081*).
- "Youth," in a positive sense, signifies the order of truths under good (*AC 5704*).
- A "husband" signifies the rational principle (*AC 265*).

"...the priests mourn, who minister to the Lord."

- Priests are to teach truth, and so lead to good, and to the Lord (*AC 10794*).

- The priesthood of Aaron, his sons, and the Levites represents the work of salvation in successive order (AC 10017).
- Mourning signifies grief because truth is destroyed and because good is also (AE 1129 [2]).
- Ministers of the Lord signify those who are in love to the Lord and in derivative worship (AE 444 [7]).
- A "minister" signifies a representative and servant of a special kind of holiness that is present when people read the Word. This holiness acts as an intermediary between the Lord and people who only understand the outward sense of the Word (AC 9419).

"Be ashamed you farmers, wail you vinedressers."

- To "be ashamed" in the negative sense means or signifies being in a natural good to conceal evils (AC 216 and 217).
- To "be ashamed" or to feel shame in the positive sense signifies a willingness to face unclean loves. The call for shame is to those who will be of the Lord's New Church. It is a call from the Lord to encourage them to seek and learn truths and to retain them. See AR 706.
- "Farmers," husbandmen, plowmen, and tillers of the soil signify those who teach, or those who are of the church, for a field signifies the church and "farmers" are the implanters of truths (AE 652 [18]).
- "Wail," "weep," "lament," and "mourn" are words used to express a state of grieving. Grieving over what? The loss of good and truth within the church. These words also represent the Lord's grief because of the night-time state among the people as to the (lack of) truths of faith in the church. See AC 2910.
- "Vinedressers" signify those who have truths and teach them (AE 911 [13]).

"...lie all night in sackcloth."

- "Night" signifies all things of a person's (own) proprium (AC 21).
- "Night" signifies a person's state when falsities arise (AE 167 [5]).
- Therefore, what we have here is a command to search for, discover, and mourn over the evils within our natural side.

Putting It All Together

The Lord saw and knew the condition of the church. The internal state of the church was not healthy. The visible aspects of the church appeared normal. Rituals were being observed by the priests and the people. High holidays were being kept. But within these normal appearances, the church was nearing spiritual death. The hells were laboring to bring about a spiritual drought of significant proportions. How could the Lord **AWAKEN, SOBER UP, and bring His church to a WEeping AND WAILING state of honest emotional cleansing?** How could He invoke a spiritual honesty to lead the hearts and minds of His people away from rationalizations and

self-justifications? We need to recall the serious weakness of the Israelites. They believed they were the chosen, or favored, people. A spirit of invincibility carried them along for centuries, and they fostered a belief that the Lord would always rescue and excuse them. Their supposed favored status would not carry them through the "day of the Lord."

Could a plague of four kinds of locust stripping the land snap the Israelites out of their fantasies? Would Joel's speaking to the people about the wasted fields, the land mourning over the ruined grain, the wine drying up, the failure of the oil, the wheat, the barley, the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate tree, the palm tree, and the apple tree withering and drying up accomplish anything? Could Joel's reminder to the people that "joy has withered away from the sons of men" bring the church to a state of repentance and reformation?

The Divinely inspired prophecy of Joel is not only a description of the problem at hand. The Lord outlined a workable plan that, if followed, would reverse the devastation of the land and the church and guarantee the restoration of joy to the church.

Let's note the order of the plan that the Lord outlined for the revitalization of the church:

1. Virgins were to lament, gird themselves with sackcloth, and remember the husband of their youth. What is the Lord calling the church to do? He wants the church to get in touch with innocence again. They are to return to the conjunction and marriage of love and wisdom, remembering that the first love of the rational soul (the husband of youth) is to serve the Lord with gladness. They are to prepare themselves to receive good and truth from the Lord and respond to it wholeheartedly.
2. Priests, teach the truth. This is a command to lead people to the good of life and the Lord. The priests of the church must have a sincere care for the souls of those within the church. They are to offer a ministry of mediation in which they introduce the Word to the people and show how the truths relate to life. The Lord asks them to show genuine sorrow for having forgotten to do these things in the past and to rectify that deficiency as quickly as possible.
3. Farmers, you need to be ashamed. Why? Farmers represent the implanters of the Lord's truth. They apparently failed to adequately prepare the field for the planting of truth. Perhaps the field was not cleared of weeds. Rocks, roots, and hard soil were not giving truth the proper depth to find nourishment and protection from the heat of the sun.
4. Lastly, the church needs to have a hearty crying time. She needs to wail and lie all night in the sackcloth of remorse. The Lord wants His church to face the night-time of its unregenerate proprium. The church has to rein in the uncontrolled and stubborn self. The command to wear sackcloth is a call to mourn and search out the spiritual enemy of the soul by resisting the evils of self-love.

This is the "day of the Lord." When these things are done, **joy** will return to the church. The land will flourish again. The grain fields will wave in the gentle restorative breeze from the Lord. The wine will flow and taste better than that which was served first. Oil will be plentiful. Fig trees, pomegranate trees, palms, and apple trees will bear abundant crops. Joy will fill the sons of men. The Lord's New Church will restore the dignity of the church and the souls of its people.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 1:8-13*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Did you notice that we had 21 direct teachings to help us with this summary? There was less of a need to turn to derived doctrine. What was one striking teaching you noticed among those given in the Passages from the Writings section?
2. Did the "gloom and doom" theme diminish as you moved toward the spiritual sense? Why or why not?
3. *AR 706* gave a positive meaning to the experience of shame. It is a call to those who will be of the Lord's New Church to encourage them to seek and learn truths and to retain them. Had you ever thought about shame in this way? What aspects of this positive idea of shame can you see in daily living?
4. Is the passage about the virgin and "the husband of her youth" supposed to remind us of love in its beginning stages? When it comes to religion, have we retained that feeling of youthful excitement and spontaneity in loving the Lord or have we fallen into a rut of boredom and begun taking the Lord and the church for granted? What are some ways to address this problem?
5. The picturesque description of the failure of the crops and the fruit trees is intended to get us thinking about what? *AE 109 [4]* teaches that trees represent **the interiors of a person** belonging to his or her mind and disposition, and the leaves and fruit represent the **things that come from the interiors**. So the fig-tree represents the natural good (obedience) being in-filled with interior things; the pomegranate tree represents external knowledge being in-filled by doctrinal things from the Word; the apple tree represents the joy of the heart that draws its strength from spiritual good. Given this brief overview, can you refine this concept specifically to your life or some example? Work with this slowly and with a friend or two.

6. What about the healthiness of having a good cry to work out a resolution of guilt or shame? How can one have a good cry and then get over it by doing something positive? The Lord wants repentance, not moroseness.
7. What state of mind brings us joy? How about this idea as revealed in *AC 3118*: "...in the Word 'gladness' is predicated of truth, and 'joy' of good...Gladness is of the countenance [face], but joy [is] of the heart; or...gladness is of spiritual affection or truth, but joy is of celestial affection or of good; thus gladness is in a degree less than joy..."
8. What did you get from the Lord's message to the virgin, the priests, and the farmers, and the directive to the priests to lie all night in sackcloth?

JOEL 1:14

"Consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly; gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Exhortation to be converted..."

Derived Doctrine

"Consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly..."

- "Consecrate," or sanctify, signifies to "represent the Lord and the holy things which are from Him...thus it denotes to be led by the Lord, because the Lord alone is holy, and everything holy proceeds from Him..." (*AC 9988, 10111, and 10128*)
- A "fast" signifies an unhappy state when good is no longer conjoined with truths (*AC 9182 [10]*).
- To "fast" signifies to mourn on account of the lack of good and truth (*AE 1189 [2]*).
- Fasting corresponds to temptation (*AE 730*).
- "Sacred" means dedicated, set apart in honor, holy, hallowed, inviolable, and not to be profaned.
- *AC 10796* presents the following thoughts on what is holy (sacred): "Priests must have dignity and honor on account of the holy things which they engage in; but those of them who are wise give the honor to the Lord, from whom come all holy things; and not to themselves. But those of them who are not wise attribute the honor to themselves. These take it away from the Lord."

Those who attribute honor to themselves...set honor and profit above the salvation of souls, which they ought to have regard for. But those who give the honor to the Lord and not to themselves, set the salvation of souls above honor and profit."

- "Assembly" signifies setting things in order. For goods and truths cannot be assembled if there is no order. See AC 6338.
- "Assembly," or "the Tent of meeting," signifies where the presence of the Lord is (AC 9784).

"Gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord."

- What is gathered, stored up, assembled, and picked up signify the things that are in a person's memory. It "further implies that both goods and truths should be gathered in man before he is regenerated; for without [them being] gathered together, through which as means the Lord may operate, a man can never be regenerated..." (AC 679).
- "Elders," which signify "all things that are of the natural man, such as memory-knowledges of whatever kind, are nothing but things of service; for they serve the rational by enabling it to think equitably and will justly." (AC 3019)
- "Inhabitants of the world" signify people of the church who are in the goods of doctrine, and so of life (AE 741 [6]).
- "Land" signifies various things: the internal person of the church, the region where the church is, the church itself, the doctrine of love and charity where the faith of the church resides (AC 2571).
- "Into the house of the Lord" signifies the church wherein love is the principal (AC 710).
- To "cry out" is to indicate intense thought with the full intention of doing (AC 7119).
- Crying out signifies supplication to the Lord from grief (AC 8353).

Putting It All Together

P&P states that this verse refers to **the Lord's exhortation to the people to be converted**. How were the people to accomplish their conversion?

1. Be led by the Lord alone.
2. Start this process by giving up the food of natural thought (fasting) and seeking to conjoin the good and truth of the Lord. These actions are the sacred assembly.
3. Do the work of the priesthood with dignity and care for the salvation of souls.

4. Dedicate the work of the church to setting things in order. Where there is no order, there can be no influx of the Lord.
5. Assemble goods and truths with the goal that they will become the means for the Lord to regenerate all the people within the church.
6. Gather the land together in the house of the Lord where love is the principle goal, and where the people can cry out with a united voice that the intention of the church is to do the Lord's will.

All of these actions will bear fruit if the church listens to and believes in the sacred call to conversion. These things are not for the merit or honor of the people. They are for the honor of the Lord, who cares for the salvation of souls.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 1:14*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. The Lord called for a "fast." His message seems to be a reminder to us that the foods of the natural mind are not sufficient for the soul. In addition to natural food, we need the added enrichment of spiritual food. Fasting calls for us to admit that we cannot live "by bread alone." This call to fast is intended to inspire us to reflect: Will we search for spiritual truths as a part of our on-going spiritual growth? Worship, meditation, and reflection can help us organize and assemble goods and truths in a formidable way. How does the Lord call us to fast in daily life? When does He call us?
2. Recall for a moment the meaning of "elders." **Elders signify a gathering of memory-knowledges of every kind for the purpose of service.** They are to serve the rational mind. Elders are to enable us to **think equitably and to will justly.** Is this a process that you are aware of and that you find alive and well in your spiritual growth? How can you call on your "elders" in various areas of your life?
3. What does the word "conversion" mean to you? Conversions are not what the televangelists talk about and promise to their listeners. Nor is conversion achieved while listening to a gifted preacher/teacher. Conversion is a gift from the Lord that comes to us when we love the truths of the Word and make them the principle part of our inward church. Conversion comes about when we are led by continuous degrees from ignorance to enlightenment. The Lord sees our sincere desire to learn and to be guided by His Word, and

He lifts us upward, through discrete degrees, to see the spiritual and celestial levels of His truth. **Only the Lord lifts up the mind to conversion.** No one can force a "conversion" by wit or strength.

4. Let's read *HH 253*: "...man's interior and exterior faculties are such that they are turned either towards the Lord as their common center...or towards self, that is, backwards from the Lord. Those that are turned towards the Lord are also turned towards heaven. But those that are turned towards self are turned also towards the world. And to elevate these is a difficult matter; nevertheless the Lord elevates them as much as is possible, by turning the love about, which is done by means of truths from the Word."

JOEL 1:15

"Alas for the day! For the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as destruction from the Almighty."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "...and to reflect that thus will be the last time, when the Lord will come..."

AC 488 [3]

- "...in Joel...1:15...where a 'day of cloud' signifies a cloud, or falsity; the 'day of the nations' signifies the nations, or wickedness; the 'day of Jehovah' signifies vastation. When the notion of time is removed, there remains the notion of the state of the things which existed at that time. The case is the same with regard to the 'days' and 'years' that are so often mentioned..."

AC 1992 [5]

- "...in Joel...1:15...[it may] also be seen from the word *shaddai* itself, which signifies vastation, and thus temptation, for temptation is a kind of vastation. But as this name took its rise from nations in Syria, He is not called 'Elohim Shaddai,' but 'El Shaddai;'"

Doctrine of the Lord 4

- "I shall...merely adduce passages from the Word which contain the expressions 'that day,' 'in that day,' and 'in that time;' in which, by 'day,' and 'time,' is meant the Lord's advent." In the eight pages of references from the Word, *Joel 1:15* is cited.

AR 704

- "Besides these places there are many more, in which the Lord's coming and the New Church...are meant by 'the day of Jehovah;' as in these..." *Joel 1:15* is cited.

TCR 82 [2]

- "See also places where the Lord's coming is called 'the day of Jehovah'..." *Joel 1:15* is cited.

AC 5147 [4]

- Note that this passage is said to explain *Joel 1:15-17*. The exposition really covers the meaning for verses 16 and 17.

Coronis 58 [5]

- "...passages in which the vastation, desolation, and consummation of this church...shall be only named: as, for example..." *Joel 1:15-20* is cited.

AC 10609 [4]

- "In *Joel*...1:15, 18...the subject here treated of is the coming of the Lord, which is signified by 'the day of Jehovah;' and the church at that time as being vastated, that is, there being no longer any good of love or good of faith."

Derived Doctrine

"Alas for the day of the Lord is at hand..."

- The word "alas" signifies grief, lamentation, and woe (*AE 652 [18]* and *AE 654 [38]*).
- The "day of the Lord" signifies vastations and the last time and state of the church (*AC 488 [3]* and *AC 1839 [5]*).
- "At hand" signifies the Lord's ability, power, and confidence to correct disorder. See *AC 4400* for illustrations of this expression.

"It [the day of the Lord] shall come as destruction from the Almighty."

- "Destruction" signifies the damnation of those who pervert memory-knowledges (*AC 1458 [3]*).
- Mentions of "destruction" signify that people, and not the Lord, will cast themselves into hell when they destroy the church within themselves (*AR 528*).

- "Almighty" signifies the Lord's Omnipotence. The Lord alone reigns in the New Church that is to be established by Him. See *AR 247, 522, and 663*.

Putting It All Together

In *Revelation 6:10*, the Lord opens the fifth seal of the great scroll that is in His hand. When the fifth seal is opened, the souls of those who "had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held" cry out with a loud voice saying "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"

How many times, while studying the prophets, have we read about "the day of the Lord" when the awesome vastation of the church and the establishment of the New Church would finally come about? Like the souls of heaven, do we wonder **when and how long, O Lord** it will be before the New Church is the crown of all churches whose kingdom will be forever and ever?

With war, murder, brutality, and disregard for the ways of the Lord evident in our daily news, it's difficult not to become troubled with the apparent "slowness" of the Lord to bring an end to such blatant forms of disrespect and hatred of the neighbor. The repetition of a promise such as what is described in this verse of *Joel* intensifies the hope that "the day of the Lord" will come to pass.

The first word of *Joel 1:15* is "Alas," to express the Divine sadness and grief that there are, and will be, people who will choose not to listen to Him or follow His ways. The Lord is never capricious or angry. The people of the church will be given every opportunity to reform and repent. The evil people, and not the Lord, will cast themselves from the presence of heaven. So the Word repeats the theme of "the day of the Lord." The church will be emptied of those who twisted the Word and the memory-knowledges. The wicked will be held accountable and will answer to the Almighty. The Great Omnipotence will offer a steady and firm hand to the beautiful construction of the Holy City New Jerusalem. His ability, power, and confidence will win the day. The doors of the Holy City are wide open, and the Sun of Heaven leads, and shows, the way into heavenly order and peace.

For our part, in spite of recurring times of doubt and impatience, we need to read on and believe the promises of the Word, and stay faithful to the testimony written within each prophecy.

P&P sums up the reason we have this verse in *Joel*, with these words: **"to reflect that thus will be the last time, when the Lord will come..."**

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 1:15*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. The word "alas" signifies grief. What can you imagine about the kind of grief the Lord feels for those who reject and throw away their place in heaven? Is the Lord's grief infinite?
2. Do you think things in the world have gotten worse with passing time? We accept things today that would never have been accepted ten or twenty years ago. Have we loosened up on things because we have been enlightened? Or, is the acceptance of things part of the vastation process?
3. What is your view of "the day of the Lord"? Is it coming soon? Will it be in our lifetime? Do you see any signs that the Lord's New Church is growing throughout the world? What are they?
4. How much spiritual comfort did you receive when reading the summation in *P&P*? "To reflect that thus will be the last time when the Lord will come."
5. We believe in the second coming of the Lord. We welcome the Lord's second coming in the revelation of His threefold Word. Can we imagine what our life would be like without the revelation of the Writings? Think of all the areas of your life that are touched by your beliefs.

JOEL 1:16-17

"Is not the food cut off before our eyes, joy and gladness from the house of our God? The seed shrivels under the clods, storehouses are in shambles; barns are broken down, for the grain has withered."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "...and that everything of the church has been devastated..."

AC 5147 [4]

- "'Food' is mentioned in many places in the Word, and one who is not acquainted with the internal sense cannot know but that ordinary food is here meant, whereas it is spiritual food; as in...Joel...1:15-17..."

AC 5147 [6]

- "...'food' in the spiritual sense is good..."

Coronis 58 [5]

- "The passages in which the vastation, desolation, and consummation of this church are further mentioned shall be only named: as, for example...Joel 1:15-20."

AC 4137 [2]

- "There is occasional mention in the Word of 'gladness' and of 'joy,' and sometimes they are mentioned together; but 'gladness' is mentioned when the subject treated of is truth and its affection, and 'joy' when it is good and its affection, as in...Joel...1:16..."

Doctrine of Sacred Scripture 87

- "The reason why both 'joy' and 'gladness' are mentioned is that 'joy' is of good and 'gladness' of truth, or 'joy' is of love and 'gladness' of wisdom. For joy is of the heart and gladness of the soul, or joy is of the will and gladness of the understanding. That there is a marriage of the Lord and the church in these expressions...is evident from its being said..." *Joel 1:16* is cited.

AR 507

- "...although joy and gladness seem to be one thing; yet in these two expressions there is the marriage of the will and the understanding, which also is the marriage of good and truth, which exists in the whole and in every particular of the Word..." *Joel 1:16* is cited as an example.

TCR 252

- "Both joy and gladness are mentioned, because joy is predicated of good and gladness of truth, or joy of love and gladness of wisdom; for joy belongs to the heart and gladness to the spirit, or joy to the will and gladness to the understanding. That there is also a marriage of the Lord and the church..." *Joel 1:16* is cited among many other examples.

AE 660 [3]

- "...‘to rejoice’ and ‘to be glad’ are both mentioned, namely, because ‘to rejoice’ is predicated of good and its love or affection, and ‘to be glad’ is predicated of truth and its love or affection. This is the case in many other passages in the Word, as in the following..." *Joel 1:16* is cited among many other passages.

Derived Doctrine

"Is not the food cut off before our eyes, joy and gladness from the house of our God?"

- "Food" signifies the goods and enjoyments of affections supplied by the Lord that one may be regenerated (*AC 677*).
- "Food" signifies spiritual and celestial nourishment, which is faith in the Lord and love (*AC 680 [4]*).
- "Food" signifies things of use to the soul (*AC 5293*).
- "Cut off" signifies that divine truth shall be taken from the people, but shall live again in a new church (*AE 315 [23]*).
- "Eyes" signify the eyes of the spirit, namely the understanding (*AC 2701*).
- Note once again that "joy" signifies good and "gladness" truth (*TCR 252*).
- The "house of our God" (Jehovah) signifies the church in which love is primary, the celestial church, and the spiritual church (*AC 710*).

"The seed shrivels under the clods, storehouses are in shambles..."

- "Seed" signifies what produces and is produced, or begets and is begotten (*AC 254*).
- "Seed" signifies all truth that considers use (*AC 57*).
- "Seed" signifies the inseminating of truth by the Lord through the Word (*AC 932*).
- The words "shriveled," "shrink," "wither," and "dry up" signify the failing of truth and good in the natural (*AE 403 [21]*).
- "Wither" signifies that the truths of good seem to be dying (*AE 403 [6]*).
- "Wither" signifies the truths of good adulterated and dying (*AE 401 [35]*).
- "Under" signifies that which is lower, outside, inferior to, the literal or natural (*AC 564*).
- The word "clod" is mentioned in two places in the Writings: *TCR 333* and *CL 232*. Both references cite those who stand in one place and do not think about higher things. They only want to debate about issues and are not really interested in finding the truth or making spiritual progress. They want to "... tread and grind a single **clod**, and not to advance."
- "Storehouses" signify knowledges of good and truth, for these are the stores or material out of which the faith of charity can be formed (*Doctrine of Faith 25*).

- The correspondence of "shambles" is not given in the Writings. The closest I could find was "disarray." John Elliot's translation of *AC 2588* reads as follows: "...the disarray into which all that constitutes man's rationality is thrown when he reasons against Divine things, however much he may seem to himself at that time to be wise."

"...barns are broken down, for the grain has withered."

- "Barns" signify the church or the individual of the church where good and truth are (*AE 403 [9]*).
- To gather things into "the barn" signifies to conjoin with heaven (*AE 911 [5]*).
- *AC 5959* teaches that "grain" "sometimes signifies the good of truth, and sometimes the truth of good..."
- The word "withered" has already been discussed above. It signifies that the truths of good are dying.

Putting It All Together

P&P directs our minds to consider this beginning point: "...everything of the church has been devastated..." How is this illustrated in the literal sense of *Joel*?

1. The food of the church, the necessary things of love (good) and wisdom (truth), will be cut off. Why? The Lord cut the church off to prevent the people of the church from seriously hurting themselves or blaspheming the holy things of the church. How was this protection accomplished? They found spiritual food unappetizing, bland, boring, or tedious; their desire for it was erased from their view or presence by the plague and drought of self-love.
2. Their eyes missed the joy and gladness of the love and wisdom of the Word.
3. The love of being useful was no longer the highest priority in the house of God (the church).
4. When the love of being useful to the Lord and the neighbor is lost, it only makes sense that what was to produce or beget those useful acts loses its power of procreation. So the seed shriveled.
5. The great clods of the natural mind weighed down and smothered any seeds of good and truth. The wonderful image given in *CL 232* and *TCR 333* shows that debating and standing, or walking, in one place advances us nowhere. Stagnation of mind and heart are a sure-fire method of killing spiritual spontaneity.

6. In such a state, the mental storehouses of the people in the church fell into a shambles with the weight of conceit. Belief in their own cleverness and opposition to the Lord created disarray that would bring their house down.
7. The love of truth or the truth of love dried up and withered away. Such is the heart or message of these verses. The Lord, through Joel, poses a silent question: Is anyone listening? Are you willing to change? If not, know that everything in the present church will be devastated.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 1:16-17*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. The two passages of *Joel* under consideration pose some interesting questions for us to reflect on.
 - Are we hungry for the food of the Lord?
 - Do we feel a joy and gladness for the Word (good and truth) of the Lord?
 - Are we content to stand in one place "marking time" with little or no advancement or extension in spiritual matters?
 - Do we love to debate truth for the sake of appearing wise or learned?
 - Have we allowed "clods" to smother the potential growth of the Lord's seeds?
2. Can we identify with the imagery of the empty storehouses, the barns in shambles, the withering grain? Remember, these things are said in the Word to show us what the church will be like if it refuses to seek first the kingdom of heaven and all of its blessings.
3. Such a picture is not intended to be gloomy. Instead, it reminds us that this sad illustration has to be shunned. It serves to inspire us to move onward and upward with the Lord's Word, looking toward the New Church's birth in the hearts and minds of the people.
4. As we look back at these passages, we can ask ourselves: were we listening to Joel's message with joy and gladness or fear and trembling? Why?

JOEL 1:18-20

"How the animals groan! The herds of cattle are restless, because they have no pasture; even the flocks of sheep suffer punishment.

O Lord, to You I cry out; for fire has devoured the open pastures, and a flame has burned all the trees of the field. The beasts of the field also cry out to You, for the water brooks are dried up, and fire has devoured the open pastures."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "...for which reason there is lamentation."

AR 567

- "That men, as to their affections, are meant by 'beasts,' may appear from these passages..." *Joel 1:16, 18, and 20* are cited among many other references.

AE 650 [37]

- "In *Joel 1:16, 18, 20*...The state of the church [described occurs] when there are no longer in it any truths of doctrine or good of life. 'The food cut off from the house of God' signifies spiritual nourishment, which is from truths that are from good, 'the house of God' signifying the church; 'the beast groaneth, the droves of cattle are perplexed' signifies the lack of the affections of truth and thence of knowledges in the natural man, and grief on that account, 'droves of cattle' signifying the things of the natural man in the whole complex."

AC 6078 [5]

- "'Pastures' in these passages denotes the truths in which man is instructed, here such things as regard spiritual life; for spiritual life is such that if this pasturage fails, it languishes and as it were pines away as does the body when it lacks food. That 'pasture' denotes the good and truth which restore and sustain the soul or spirit of man, is clear from the Lord's words in *John 10:9*..." *Joel 1:18* is cited as a passage where the signification is similar.

AE 482 [3]

- "As it is known in the church that 'to feed' signifies to instruct, 'pasture' instruction, and 'shepherd' an instructor, a few passages only in which

'feeding' and 'pasture' are mentioned shall be quoted without further explanation." *Joel 1:18* is among the passages cited.

AC 2708 [8]

- "That 'wilderness' is predicated of a church altogether vastated, and of those who are altogether vastated as to good and truth, who cannot be reformed is thus shown in...*Joel 1:19, 20*."

AR 546

- "That by 'a wilderness' is signified the church devastated, or in which all the truths of the Word are falsified, such as it was among the Jews in the Lord's time, appears from these passages..." *Joel 1:19-20* is cited among many other passages.

AE 504 [34]

- "...a church that can be in the light of truth from the Word is called 'the forest of the south' but that is now in knowledges alone without spiritual light; 'the trees that the fire will devour' signify such knowledges...that evil cupidities will deprive such knowledges of all spiritual life, and that there will be no longer any truth in clearness..." *Joel 1:19-20* is cited as a sign of this devastation.

AE 730 [13]

- "In *Joel*...1:19, 20... 'The fire hath consumed the habitants of the wilderness and the flame hath burned all the trees of the field' signifies that the love of self and the pride of self-intelligence have consumed all the perception of good and all the understanding of the truth of doctrine from the sense of the letter of the Word, 'fire' signifying the love of self, 'flame' the pride of self-intelligence, 'the habitations of the wilderness' the goods of doctrine from the sense of the letter of the Word, and the 'trees of the field' the knowledges of its truth. The sense of the letter of the Word is called a 'wilderness' when it is merely understood naturally, thus according to appearances, and not at the same time spiritually, or according to the genuine sense. 'The beasts of the field pant after Thee' signifies the lamentations of those who are natural and yet have a desire for truths; that 'beasts' signify the affections of the natural man may be seen above (n. 650); 'for the streams of water are dried up, and the fire hath consumed the habitations of the wilderness' signifies that consequently there are no longer any truths and goods of life."

Derived Doctrine

"How the animals groan!"

- In the good sense, "animals," or "beasts," represent affections longing to be instructed or spiritually nourished (*AE 650 [10]*).
- "Groaning" signifies grief on account of the effort of falsities to subjugate (*AC 6803*).
- "Groaning" and "sighing" signify the destruction of the affections of good (*AE 863 [2]*).

"The herds of cattle are restless..."

- Could the word "restless" describe a state of being "perplexed" or "distressed"?
- "Perplexed" signifies confusion of external knowledges mixed in the outer memory (*AC 2831*).
- "Distressed" signifies a state in which the internal is alienated from the external (*AC 5470*).
- "Distressed" signifies the beginning of temptations acting on the conscience in a case in which the person does not know the origin of his or her fear and distress (*AC 4249*).
- Your attention, for the signification of the rest of this passage, is redirected to *AE 730 [13]* as cited above.
- Let's ponder for a moment the meaning of "open pastures" being devoured. This phrase occurs twice in our lesson. When the Word mentions something twice, it is not for poetical effect or repetition. Usually, when something is mentioned twice, it is to teach us about what is happening to the will and understanding.
- "Open," in the positive sense, signifies to bring out, to be taught, to communicate and conjoin things that had been concealed (*AE 303*). In the negative sense, devouring "open pastures" seems to represent a loss of the ability to communicate and conjoin (use and nurture) spiritual goods and truths.

Putting It All Together

Hard as it may be, we are to picture the church totally devoid of any truths of doctrine or good of life. What does that mean? Can we think of any examples of this state occurring in our lifetime, or in history?

The spiritual sense of Joel's prophecy explains that the problem arises when the love of self and the pride of intelligence go out of control. The church, lacking the Lord's guidance, misuses the literal sense of the Word with no thought about the meaning

of the spiritual sense. For which reason, *P&P* teaches, there is just cause for "lamentation." How does the Word picture for us the devastation of the church?

- **Animals groan.** Affections long to be instructed and nourished.
- **Herds of cattle are restless.** Internals and externals feel a sense of alienation.
- **There is a loss of pastures.** The understanding languishes because of the lack of instructional feeding.
- **The flocks of sheep suffer punishment.** Innocence of wisdom is conflicted.
- **Fire devours the open pastures.** Self-love burns away at the core of a person's understanding.
- **The flame has burned all of the trees of the field.** There is a loss of knowledge.
- **The beasts of the field cry out to the Lord.** There is a sense of desperation for the Lord's help.
- **The water brooks are dried up.** Thirst for the living waters of the Lord is felt when human wisdom can't quench the soul's deep thirst for genuine truth.
- **Fire devours the open pastures.** Self love burns away the core of a person's will.

Have we come any closer to understanding this section of the prophetic meaning of the church's lamentation? Is the universal church of our time experiencing anything that sounds akin to these spiritual symptoms?

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 1:18-20*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. How many times have we read about the church being devastated? It seems that this is a theme that runs throughout the Prophets. Does hearing it so often dull or numb the "alarm" system of the conscience?
2. What usually brings about the devastation of the Church? The church is devastated when people fall in love with themselves and their own intelligence. Did this happen to everyone in the church? Weren't there a few faithful souls in the church? Can you picture a whole church gone off the deep end of self-love and self-intelligence? I can picture some sweet elderly woman or man doing charitable good to others. Can you, too? The Lord always preserves a remnant of the church, on which the new church can be founded. The devastation of the church happens when the Word is ignored,

when the literal sense is twisted and misapplied, when people no longer seek the spiritual sense of the Lord's Word. Notice what action the Lord takes in this situation. He brings about the spirit of lamentation, a longing for innocence and peace.

3. Have you ever thought this process through? If we fail to study; if we fail to look for the inner sense; if we rely on our own wisdom and not the Lord's, lamentation rightly begins. The Lord grieves for us. His providence works to empty such self-centered thoughts from His Holy Temple. Do we share His zealous endeavor to guard the Word?
4. How can we keep indifferent attitudes from coming into our hearts? A loving worship of the Lord can keep the doors wide open. We can become mindful of the need to have periodic self-examination so the light of heaven can keep us on the right path. Do we? Will we?
5. Last question: Please take the time to read *CL 532* and *533*. What inspiration did you feel after reading these numbers? Do you have any ideas of how we can make the truths, written on the paper, shine like a star again?

Chapter Two

JOEL 2:1-3

"Blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of the Lord is coming, for it is at hand: a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, like the morning clouds spread over the mountains. A people come, great and strong, the like of whom has never been; nor will there ever be any such after them, even for many successive generations."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "The Lord will come and will execute judgment, when falsity and evil from the sensual has destroyed the whole church."

AE 405 [26]

- "...Jerusalem is called 'the mountain of holiness,' also 'the hill;' for 'the mountain of holiness,' likewise 'hill,' signify spiritual good, which in its essence is truth from good, as can be seen from the following passages." *Joel 2:1* is cited.

AC 1860 [3]

- "That 'darkness' signifies falsity, and 'thick darkness' evil, may be seen from the following passages in the Word." *Joel 2:1-2* is cited.

AC 2405 [3]

- "In Joel...2:1, 2...The Lord's advent and His kingdom are treated of; it is said a 'day of darkness and of thick darkness,' because the good are then being separated from the evil...and after the good have been separated, then the evil perish."

AC 7688 [2]

- "In these passages 'darkness' signifies falsities. In the Word 'darkness' also signifies ignorance of truth, such as the Gentiles are in who have not the Word and know nothing of the Lord." *Joel 2:1-2* is cited.

AC 7711 [2]

- "That in the Word both 'darkness' and 'thick darkness' are mentioned together, and that 'darkness' then denotes the privation of truth, and thick darkness the privation of both truth and good, can be seen from the following passages." *Joel 1:1-2* is cited.

AR 397

- "...it may be seen what is signified by 'sounding with trumpets.' That here...is signified the exploration and manifestation of what the state of the church is with those whose religion is faith alone..." *Joel 2:1-2* is cited.

AE 502 [8]

- "...'sounds of trumpets' signify Divine truth coming down out of heaven, and terrifying the evil and dispersing them...In *Joel 2:1, 2*...'The day of Jehovah' is the coming of the Lord, when also the Last Judgment takes place on the evil."

AC 9434 [4]

- "In these passages by a 'devouring fire' is meant the fire of the cupidities which arise from the loves of self and of the world, because this is the fire which consumes a man, and which vastates the church..." *Joel 2:1-3* is cited as an example passage.

AE 504 [34]

- "...'the day of Jehovah,' which is the Last Judgment, is predicated in the Prophets...In *Joel...2:1-3*..."

AE 1135 [2]

- "...in the Word those are called 'mighty' who are in evils and falsities therefrom, and have fortified themselves by means of devices against the goods and truths of the church, thus those with whom the church is devastated, and who devastate the church with others. As in *Joel...2:1, 2, 7*... where also the Last Judgment is treated of, which is signified by 'the day of Jehovah, a day of darkness and of thick darkness.' Those who are in falsities of evil and have fortified their falsities against truths by reasonings and by falsifications of the Word, are signified by 'a people great and mighty;' that they reason from falsities against truths, and thus assail truths..."

AC 31

- "That the 'great luminaries' signify love and faith, and are also called 'sun, moon, and stars,' is evident from the Prophets, as in...Joel 2:1, 2, 10..."

Doctrine of Sacred Scripture 14 [3]

- "In Joel 2:1, 2, 10; 3:15...'The day of Jehovah' means the Lord's advent, which took place when there was no longer anything good and true left in the church, and not any knowledge of the Lord."

Brief Exposition 78

- "In all these passages it treats of the last time of the Jewish Church, which was when the Lord came into the world..." *Joel 2:1, 2, and 10* are cited.

TCR 198

- "By 'the day of Jehovah' the coming of the Lord is meant, which took place when there no longer remained in the church any good of love or truth of faith, or any knowledge of the Lord; therefore it is called 'a day of darkness and of thick darkness.'" *Joel 2:1, 2, 10, and 3:15* are cited.

AE 526 [4]

- "...the Last Judgment...is meant by 'the day of Jehovah great and terrible;' and as this comes when the church is in darkness and in thick darkness..." *Joel 2:1, 2, and 10* are cited.

AC 488 [2]

- "In Joel...2:1, 2...where 'day' signifies a state of darkness and thick darkness, of cloud and of obscurity, with each one in particular, and with all in general."

Doctrine of the Lord 4

- "I shall in this first chapter merely adduce passages from the Word which contain the expressions 'that day,' 'in that day,' and 'in that time;' in which, by 'day,' and 'time,' is meant the Lord's advent." *Joel 2:1-2* is cited along with eight other verses in the chapters of *Joel*.

AR 704

- "...there are many more [passages], in which the Lord's coming and the New Church from Him at that time are meant by 'the day of Jehovah'..." *Joel 2:1, 2, and 11* are cited.

TCR 82 [2]

- "...that it was Jehovah God Himself who descended and became Man, is made clear in the following passages...see also the places where the Lord's coming is called 'the day of Jehovah' as in...*Joel 2:1, 2, 11*..."

TCR 689

- "From all this it is clear that unless a way had been made ready for Jehovah when He was descending into the world, by means of baptism, the effect of which in heaven was to close up the hells and guard the Jews against total destruction [they would all have perished]." *Joel 2:1, 2, 11, and 3:2, 4* are cited.

AC 1861 [14]

- "...'fire' denotes the infernal punishment of those who...pass their lives in the falsity of hatred. In the sense of the letter such 'fire' and 'fury' are attributed to Jehovah, but in the internal sense it is quite the contrary." *Joel 2:1 and 3* are cited.

AR 546

- "That by 'a wilderness' is signified the church devastated, or in which all the truths of the Word are falsified, such as it was among the Jews in the Lord's time, appears from these passages..." *Joel 2:1 and 3* is cited.

AE 730 [14]

- "In [*Joel 2:1, 3*] 'The day of Jehovah' means the end of the church, called the consummation of the age, and the Lord's coming at that time. That at the end of the church the love of self and the consequent pride of self-intelligence consume all its goods and truths is signified by 'a fire devoureth before him, and behind him a flame kindleth,' 'fire' signifying the love of self, and 'flame' the pride of self-intelligence..."

AE 372 [7]

- "From this it can be seen that 'black (nigrum)' and 'black (atrum)' in the Word signify the absence of truth; and 'darkness,' 'clouds,' 'obscurity,' and

many things from which blackness arises have a like signification. As in Joel... 2:2..."

AE 594 [18]

- "So the Last Judgment, when those who are in the falsities of evil are to perish, is called: 'A day of cloud and of obscurity' (Joel 2:2...)..."

AC 5376 [12]

- "In Joel...2:2, 3...it is evident that desolation is the apparent deprivation of truth with those who are being regenerated, but is the absolute deprivation of it with those who are not being regenerated."

AE 783 [3]

- "...those who are in falsities are called in the Word 'powerful,' 'vigorous,' 'mighty,' 'strong,' 'heroes,' 'rulers,' 'terrible,' 'dreadful,' and wasters, as can be seen from various passages, as from the following." *Joel 2:2* and *7* are cited.

AC 2495 [2 & 3]

- "...in the consummation of the age (or last period of the church) there will no longer be any love, or charity, nor therefore any faith. That this is the meaning is evident from similar words of the Lord in the Prophets, as in...Joel...2:2, 10."

Derived Doctrine

"Blow [sound] the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My Holy mountain!"

- "Sound" signifies the influx of truths and also the announcement of truth (*AC 9926*).
- In *AC 8815*, we read "...'the voice,' or sound, 'of a trumpet,' [signifies] the truth of celestial good...and 'a trumpet' celestial good..."
- To "sound" a "trumpet," or "horn," signifies to announce that the intellectual of the church has been laid to waste (*AC 4592 [10]*).
- "Zion" signifies heaven and the church where the Lord alone is worshipped(*AR 612*).
- "Zion" signifies a new church among the gentiles that should acknowledge the Lord (*AE 721 [8]* and *AE 730 [27]*).
- "Zion" signifies the advent of the Lord, and the establishment of the church by Him among those who are in the good of love (*AE 433 [8]*).
- To "warn" the people represents "that they should not desire to go up to the heaven where the Divine celestial is." In other words, the warning was issued

that they should not seek to bring damnation upon themselves by seeking to become god-like (AC 8830).

- "Mountain of holiness" signifies heaven, especially the inmost heaven where love to the Lord prevails (AE 314 [4]).
- The "mountain of Jehovah" and "rock of Israel" signify the Lord and goods of love, and the Lord and goods of charity, respectively (AC 795 [3]).

"Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble..."

- "Inhabitants of the world" in the positive sense signify people of the church who are in the goods of doctrine, and so of life (AE 741 [6]).
- It would appear that those who were not in the goods of doctrine and a life in accordance to them needed to tremble. "Trembling" signifies feeling distress during temptation (AE 282 [6]).
- "Land" signifies various things: the internal man of the church, the region where the church is, the church itself, the doctrine of love and charity where the faith of the church resides (AC 2571).

"A people come, great and strong, the like of whom has never been; nor will there ever be any such after them..."

- As an important reminder of what this passage means, recall the direct teachings of AE 1135 [2]. The people of this church played games with the power of their reasoning. They took falsities and used them to assault truths, to make truths look like lies. We are given an example of the magnitude of their malignancy. They imagined themselves to be invincible giants in the land. "...nor will there ever be any such after them." That is not a compliment. That is a reassuring promise from the Lord. The rise and establishment of the Lord's New Church would subdue the spiritual lunacy of hell. Hell's imagined invincibility would melt away in the presence of the Sun of Heaven. Never again! Never again!

Putting It All Together

The last paragraph of the Derived Doctrine section sets us on course to "put it all together" in this section.

P&P teaches that the Lord will come and execute judgment. **For the evil**, it will be a day of terrible judgment. Of course! **The evil sense** that their power to twist truth into lies is over. **Evil's imagined power** over others will end. **For the evil**, it will be a day of darkness and gloominess. **The evil** will feel the loss of their control, and they are not happy about that. The giants of hell are to be made insignificant "midgets," and they are sad about that reality. How do we know that this is so? The Lord has said so! He is the all-knowing and all-powerful Lord of heaven. Nothing can stand in His presence and challenge Him.

On the other side of this prophecy stands the Sun of Heaven offering light, warmth, and optimism to the faithful remnant preserved by the Lord. The Lord shares **with the faithful** the news that never again will there be the likes of these adulterers, prevaricators, deceivers, intimidators, and haters of the Lord. Their reign of terror is over! **To the faithful**, this is a day of joy and good news. Take heart all you who wait for the Lord. He is coming. Sound the alarm. Spread the good word from His holy mountain: "This is the day that the Lord has made. We will be glad and rejoice in it."

Does your heart thrill at the news of this righting of wrong and terror? It needs to because the next portion of Joel's prophecy speaks of the hells attempting to be men of war and heroes. Hell threatens the city. The hells act like strong horses leaping over mountaintops. They climb the walls of the city and break in through windows. They lunge with weapons. Chaos breaks out throughout the city.

While reading further in *Joel*, we must come back to these verses to remember the Lord's promise that hell will be defeated. Knowing this truth calms the spirit and builds our anticipation of good winning out over evil.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 2:1-3*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Why is it that evil never learns that it cannot stand against the Lord and win?
2. How can evil love to twist truth to falsity?
3. Hellish spirits want to make others unhappy. They enjoy and burn with a plan to pull people away from the Lord. Does the thought of this plan rally you to the cause of working with the Lord to overcome their plan?
4. The lunacy of hell is sad, empty, and illogical. The sanity of heaven is happy, full, and lucid. Is there really a question about which one we want for our lives to eternity?

JOEL 2:4-9

"Their appearance is like the appearance of horses; and like swift steeds, so they run. With a noise like chariots over mountaintops they leap, like the noise of a flaming fire that devours the stubble, like a strong people set in battle array. Before them the people writhe in pain; all faces are drained of color. They run like mighty men, they climb the wall like men of war; every one marches in formation, and they do not break

ranks. They do not push one another; every one marches in his own column. Though they lunge between the weapons, they are not cut down. They run to and fro in the city, they run on the wall; they climb into the houses, they enter at the windows like a thief."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Falsity of evil will destroy all things of it by various insanities."

AC 5135 [9]

- "In Joel 2:7 and 9...a 'great people and mighty' denotes falsities fighting against truths...and because they fight mightily in destroying truths, they are said to be 'like heroes and men of war;' the 'city' through which they are said to 'run to and fro' denotes the doctrinals of truth...The 'houses into which they shall climb' denote the goods which they destroy...The 'windows through which they shall enter in' denote things intellectual and the derivative reasonings...hence they are compared to a 'thief' because they take possession of the abode previously occupied by truths and goods."

AE 412 [30]

- "In Joel 2:6...this treats of evils and falsities devastating the church, and of the judgment upon those who are in them; those who are in falsities are signified by 'the peoples who tremble;' their interiors which are in falsities of evil are signified by 'the faces that have gathered blackness;' 'faces' meaning the interiors, and 'blackness' the falsity of evil. The infernals who are in falsities from evil appear black in the light of heaven."

AE 746 [4, 5, & 6]

- "'Man and brother' signify truth and good, and in the contrary sense falsity and evil...'brother and companion' signifying good from which is truth and truth from good, and in the contrary sense evil from which is falsity and falsity from evil..." *AE 746 [6]* quotes *Joel 2:8* as an example.

AC 3391 [2]

- "In [Joel 2:9]...speaking of the evils and falsities of the last days of the church; 'climbing up into the houses' denotes destroying the goods of the will (that 'house' denotes the goods of the will may be seen...n. 710, 2233, 2334); and 'entering in by the windows' denotes destroying truths and their knowledges which are of the understanding."

AR 164

- "Since good and truth are taken away from those who are in dead worship, as if it were done by a thief in the dark, therefore in the Word the same is sometimes likened to a thief, as in the following passages..." *Joel 2:9* is cited as an example.

AR 898

- "...a wall great and high, signifies the Word in the sense of the letter from which is the doctrine of the New Church...Nothing else is meant by its 'wall' but the Word in the sense of the letter...for that sense protects the spiritual sense, which lies hidden within, as the wall does a city and its inhabitants... And that this sense is the guard, lest the interior Divine truths, which are those of the spiritual sense, should be injured...It is called 'a wall great and high,' because...'great' is predicated of good, and 'high' of truth...[as may be seen] in the following passages..." *Joel 2:9* is cited.

TCR 318

- "...to steal means to deprive others of the truths of their faith, which is done by means of falsities and heresies. Priests, who minister solely for gain or from a lust for honor, and teach what they see or might see from the Word to be untrue, are spiritual thieves, since they take away from the people the means of salvation, which are the truths of faith. Such are called thieves in the Word, in the following passages..." *Joel 2:9* is cited.

AE 193 [7]

- "In Joel (2:9)...The vastation of the church through falsities from evil is here treated of; 'city' and 'wall' signify the things of doctrine; 'houses' and 'windows' things pertaining to the mind that receives; 'houses' that part of the mind that is called the will, where good is, and 'windows' that part of the mind that is called the understanding, where truth is. (That 'city' in the Word is doctrine, see *Arcana Coelestia*, n. 402, 2449, 2712, 2943, 3216, 4492, 4493; that 'wall' is the truth of doctrine defending, n. 6419; that 'house' is that part of the mind which is called the will, where good is, n. 2231, 2233, 2559, 3128, 5023, 6690, 7353, 7910, 7929, 9150; and 'windows' that part of the mind which is called the understanding where truth is, n. 655, 658, 3391.) From this it is clear what is signified by 'running upon the wall,' 'coming up into the houses,' and 'entering in through the windows like a thief.'"

AE 1005

- "Behold I come as a thief, signifies the Lord's coming and the Last Judgment at that time. This is evident from the signification of 'coming as a thief,' as being in reference to the Lord, His coming and the Last Judgment...This is the signification of 'coming as a thief,' because taking away the knowledges of good and truth, and devastating the church, as a thief takes away wealth and robs a house, is attributed to the Lord; also because the church is then in night and in darkness, that is, in falsities from evil, and the last state of the church is called 'night,' and the falsities of evil that then prevail are called 'darkness,' and a thief comes in the night when it is dark. This is why the Lord's coming and Last Judgment are compared to a thief..." *Joel 2:9* is cited as an example.

Derived Doctrine

"Their appearance is like the appearance of horses..."

- AC 589 teaches "...the Word was spoken according to the **appearances** with man. Whoever therefore desires to confirm false principles by the **appearances**, according to which the Word was spoken, can do so by passages without number. But it is one thing to confirm false principles by the Word, and another to believe in simplicity what is in the Word. He who confirms false principles...scrapes together and accumulates confirmations wherever he can, thus also from the Word, until he so strongly persuades himself that he can no longer see the truth" (emphasis added).
- The word "appearances" is mentioned twice. Could such a repetition be used to illustrate how the will and understanding are influenced to confirm an error by appearances?
- AR 298 teaches that "horses" signify the Word and the understanding of the Word. Think about the colors of the horses mentioned in *Revelation 6*: white, red, black, and pale. The progression of colors from white to pale is used to signify the stages the Word goes through when it is falsified.

"...like swift steeds, so they run."

- "Swift" is used when referring to intelligence and the affection of truth. In the opposite sense, "swift" signifies reasoning against truth. See AE 281 [7 & 10].
- The word "steed" is used when referring to a spirited horse, a stud horse, or a war horse, according to *Webster's Dictionary*.
- "...like swift steeds" has a positive and negative usage in the Word. Which way are we to understand the meaning of this passage? It seems that we are led to see it in the negative sense. Hell imagines itself to be swift, virile, and so clever.

"...so they run."

- Picture the meaning of this in your mind. We have an expression, "running with our thoughts." Can we see the hells running with their insane thoughts like wild steeds? What kind of emotions do they display to all they hope to intimidate? Listen to the next part!

"With a noise like chariots..."

- *AC 5321 [10]* defines "chariots," in the negative sense, as representing the doctrine of evil and falsity with the outward (worldly) knowledge or "facts" confirming it. The noisy shouting of how wise and true evil's thinking is comes to mind.
- If these things had been said of the Lord, they would have corresponded to doctrinal things of good and truth leading the way to salvation (*AE 355 [4]* and *AC 5321 [6]*).

"...like chariots over mountaintops they leap, like the noise of a flaming fire that devours the stubble."

- "Over" signifies having a glimpse of what is within (*AR 800*).
- Because we know this passage is describing the hells, we can turn to the negative correspondence of "mountain." *AR 336* and *AE 411* describe "mountains" as signifying evils which spring from the love of self and of the world.
- "Leaping" in the positive sense represents an expression of joy from the conjunction of good and truth. Thus, there is a sense of joyousness (*AE 710 [31]*). Once again, we must consider this correspondence of "leaping" in its negative sense. In a negative sense, this meaning of "leaping" suggests that the hells were delighted with themselves over their delusional false perception of their mighty disjunction of good and truth.
- "...the noise of a flaming fire..." Can we hear the snap and crackle and see the flying sparks of self-love burning away within their hearts? *AC 306* describes the meaning of "flame of a sword" as self-love "with its insane desires and consequent persuasions...carried away to corporeal and earthly things..."
- "Devours" signifies the destruction of doctrine at its inception (*AR 542*). *AC 9348 [4]* teaches that "devours" signifies the destruction of goods and truths.
- "Stubble" signifies outward knowledges we are taught by other people (*AC 7131*). Stubble is also referred to as "chaff," which signifies the casting down and subjugation of the hells by the Lord when external knowledges are scattered and removed (*AC 2468*).

"...like a strong people set in battle array."

- "Strong" in the good sense signifies truth, which cannot be resisted (*AC 426 [3]*). "Strong" in the good sense also signifies the celestial church that is in the good of love to the Lord (*AC 4545 [2]*). "Strong" in the negative sense describes the evil of the love of self (*AC 6306 [4]*).
- "Battle" in the negative sense signifies falsity fighting the truth of the New Church (*AR 431 and 704*). "Battle array" refers to armament, or battle clothing, worn by a warrior. What would an angel wear? What would an evil warrior wear? For hellish spirits, the clothing would consist of secular reasoning that would support their claim of invincibility and power over the Lord and His church. They would use practiced, smooth, cunning angles to prey on the unsuspecting, spiritually uninformed, and uneducated souls. In contrast, angels would be clothed with the finest truths of eternal unity with the Lord and His Word.

"Before them the people writhe in pain..."

- "Writhing" signifies cunning and deceit (*AE 581 [8]*).
- "Pain," "sore," and "sorrow" signify conflicts with resulting anxieties (*AC 261*).
- "Pain" signifies lusts that cause misery (*AC 4496*).

"...all faces are drained of color"

- Note Bene: The *New King James Bible* uses "faces are drained of color," and the *Revised Standard Version* has "all faces grow pale." Whereas the *King James Bible* and the Writings read "all faces gather blackness." What do we do with this difference? My inclination is to go with the "faces gathering blackness" because of the direct teaching we have in *AE 412 [30]*.

"...every one marches in formation, and they do not break ranks."

- *AC 3901 [7 & 8]* explains the meaning of "marching through the breadth of the land" as signifying the vastation of the truths of the church. In the positive sense, "marching" signifies the enlightenment of the gentiles by the Lord when He assumed the Human (*AE 594 [13]*). In this verse, it appears that "marching" is meant to illustrate both senses. In the negative sense, it announces the inevitable judgment on the vastated church, which would occur even though it appeared solidly organized, in step, and unified. And it could be a positive prophetic promise that enlightenment would be restored to the world and church through the advent of the Lord.

"...they do not push one another; every one marches in his own column."

- Let's first focus on the spiritual meaning of "push," shove, or jostle. *AC 8593* describes the nature of hellish genii as "pushers" of anyone who tires or weakens in the process of regeneration. *AC 4585* describes the minds of people who don't want to believe in things that belong to eternal life as people who like to "push" ideas from themselves and at heart reject truth from the moment they see it. *New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine 71* describes the spiritually insane and those with immoderate lusts as people who aspire to "unlimited power and glory," who desire **"to push their rule into heaven and transfer to themselves the Divine power of the Lord..."** and constantly crave to go even beyond this" (emphasis added). *Spiritual Experiences (SE) 2121* describes vicious groups, hard to control, who gang up and harass people, relishing the chance to push people around in an insolent manner, constantly trying to bring harm and destruction upon many.
- What does the above information tell us about the possible meaning of this verse? I sense that hell doesn't argue with itself when it purposes to "push" the spiritual things of the Word around. Hell hopes to find the Lord's believers in a tired and wavering state. Hell is unified in its rejection of the Lord's truth from the moment it sees or hears it. Hell is marching in unison to usurp the Divine power of the Lord. Hell is an unruly gang that acts up in an insolent way to bring harm and destruction to those who love the Lord. **Therefore, they don't push each other, and they all assume their own column to wage war against the Lord and His followers.**
- The image of everyone marching in his own column seems to be representative of the idea that they had their cadence, their own ideas, and eventually, their own spiritual rut. The expression, "Johnny One-Note," refers to this kind of absence of variety or harmony. It describes the shouting of one idea without consideration of the myriad avenues truth has to offer.

"Though they lunge between the weapons, they are not cut down."

- How are we to picture what this passage means? Do we see them thrusting their weapons wildly to and fro? Do they jump between the thrusts, narrowly avoiding being cut or killed?
- *AC 9141 [4]* teaches that in the negative sense, "weapons" signify the consuming and desolating of good and truth. In the positive sense, "weapons" signifies the truths of doctrine from the Word, which afford protection from the falsities of evil.
- Will the rebellious ones escape accountability for their assault on the city? We know the answer to this question. In the end, evil loses. The Lord will win!

Putting It All Together

The Lord outlines for us in this section of the Word a story of hell's imagined power. He shows us the hoard of spirited warriors. He lets us see their imagined agility and likens them to horses, swift steeds, and chariots. They have a leaping ability; they run like mighty men and climb the walls of buildings, entering through the windows. It appears that they march in ordered rows with a cadence of deafening proportion. Their faces are blackened and ugly. They thrust their weapons in chaotic motions. Amazingly, they don't do harm to themselves. They are not our friends. Instead, they are called thieves, and they wish to rob us of our goods.

Is the Lord's purpose in telling us this **just** to scare us? I don't think that is the plan. Instead, I believe He shows us this picture so that we have a feeling of revulsion for the hells. Listen to this teaching in *AC 1740 [3]*:

"...the greater the horror that is conceived for evils and falsities, the more of love for goods and truths is insinuated by the Lord. And further, the greater the horror for evils and falsities **the less do evil spirits dare to approach, for they cannot endure aversion and horror for the evils and falsities in which their life consists...**" (emphasis added).

CL 249 urges us to become involved in the uses and resistance plan outlined by the Lord in the Word. By doing this, we let our mind be "bound and circumscribed as by a circle, within which it is successively integrated into a form truly human. From this as from a house [each person] sees the various lusts as outside of himself, and from sanity of reason within, banishes them."

Scary as hell might appear in these verses, it is essential that we know and remember, at all times, that hell is not what it appears to be. The Lord has a plan for us that is powerfully summed up in this passage of *AC 1717 [2]*: "...he who is in combats of temptations, and conquers, acquires more power over evil spirits...until at last **they dare not attempt anything**" (emphasis added).

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 2:4-9*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Were you able to put the bullies of hell in their proper perspective after reflecting on the meaning and uses of these verses? When do we most need to do this?

2. Do you feel you can use the Lord's plan for revulsion against the hells? If yes —how? If no—why not?
3. Why were the hells able to thrust their weapons wildly and not bring harm to themselves?
4. Doesn't the Lord do this in the deepest of the hells as well? He mercifully sends His tender angels there to snap them, ever so briefly, back to a moment of sanity so they can't do harm to themselves and others. What does this tell us about the Lord?
5. What did you think about the passages in the Putting It All Together section that tell us of the great victories we can have over hell?

JOEL 2:10

"The earth quakes before them, the heavens tremble; the sun and moon grow dark, and the stars diminish their brightness."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "All good and truth has been dispersed, together with the knowledges (cognitions) of them."

AC 1066 [2]

- "In Joel 2:10...The church and the things of the church...are said to quake... when these are vastated, 'heaven and earth' are said to quake, and the 'sun and moon' to grow dark, that is, love and faith."

AC 1808 [3, 4, & 7]

- "Every one can see that by 'the stars' and 'constellations' here are not meant stars and constellations, but things true and good; and by 'the sun,' and by 'the moon,' faith; for the evils and falsities which cause darkness are treated of...by 'the sun' the celestial things of love, by 'the moon' the spiritual things, by 'the stars' things good and true, that is, the knowledges of what is good and true, which are thus darkened near the consummation of the age, when there is no faith, that is no charity." *Joel 2:10* is cited.

AC 2441 [4 & 5]

- "To those who are in evils of the love of self and of the world, that is, to those who are in hatreds against all things of love to the Lord and of charity toward the neighbor, the light of heaven actually appears as thick darkness; on which account it is said in the Word that to such the 'sun was blackened;' by which is signified that they rejected everything of love and charity, and received everything that is contrary thereto...As in Joel 2:10..."

AC 3355 [3]

- "In Joel 2:10...the subject is the day of the Last Judgment; the 'earth quaking' denotes a changed state of the church; the 'sun and moon,' the good of love and its truth (n. 1529, 1530, 2441, 2495), which are said to 'become black,' when goods and truths are no longer acknowledged; the 'stars' denote the knowledges of good and truth (n. 2495, 2849)."

HH 119

- *Joel 2:10*, among other references, is cited: "In these passages the 'sun' signifies love, and the 'moon' faith, and 'stars' knowledges of good and truth. These are said to be darkened, to lose their light, and to fall from heaven, when they are no more. That the Lord is seen as a sun in heaven is evident also from His appearance when transfigured before Peter, James, and John."

AR 51

- "By 'stars falling from heaven' are not meant stars, but that the knowledges of good and truth will perish." *Joel 2:10* is cited.

AR 312

- "They who appear in the abominable kind of blackness are called devils, such holding truth in abomination as horned owls do the light of the sun. But they appear in that kind of blackness...That 'black,' in the Word, is spoken of falsity, may appear from these passages..." *Joel 2:10* is cited.

AR 331

- "'Earthquakes' signify changes of state in the church, because 'the earth' signifies the church...and because in the spiritual world, when the state of the church is perverted anywhere and there is a change, there is an earthquake, and as this is a prelude to their destruction, there is terror...But these things are to be understood as being done in the spiritual world, but not in the natural world..." *Joel 2:10* is cited.

AR 413

- "...by 'the sun' is signified love...by 'the moon' is signified intelligence and faith...by 'stars' are signified the knowledges of truth and good from the Word...by 'being darkened' is signified not to be seen or known by reason of evils from falsities and falsities from evils. Evils from falsities are with those who assume the falsities of religion, and confirm them till they appear as truths, and when they live according to them they do evils from falsities, or the evils of falsity...When light is extinguished, there comes darkness." *Joel 2:10* is cited as an example.

AE 372 [3]

- "...'sun' signifies the good of love, and 'moon' the truth of faith." Later in *AE 372 [b]*, *Joel 2:10* is cited as an example.

AE 400 [3]

- "In *Joel...2:10*...'Earth and the heavens' here, as often elsewhere, signify the church; 'earth' the external church, and 'heavens' the internal church. The external church means the worship from good and truth in the natural man; and the internal church, the good of love and the faith, which is in the spiritual man, from which is worship; for as there is an internal and external man, or a spiritual and a natural man, so is it with the church...A change and perversion of the church is signified by 'the earth trembled, and the heavens quaked;' 'the sun and the moon were blackened' signifies that there is no good of love or truth of faith, and 'the stars withdrew their brightness' signifies that there were no longer any knowledges of truth and good."

Canons, chapter IV [5]

- In this passage, *Joel 2:10* is cited as an example of the following: "The progression of the church to its end, and the end itself, are described in very many places in the Word."

Derived Doctrine

The direct teachings on *Joel 2:10* are so complete that we have no need to use derived doctrine this time.

Putting It All Together

To get into the meaning of this verse, let's think about **end, cause, and effect**. **End** relates to that which is first—love of the Lord. **Cause** relates to that which is of

wisdom from the Lord. **Effect** relates to uses or the application of love and wisdom in life as shown by the Lord.

When love for the Lord (End), represented by the sun, is significantly perverted in the heart and mind of the church, consequences follow the pollution of that love. The faith (Cause), represented by the moon, loses its light. From science classes, we have learned that the moon has no light of its own. The moon reflects the light of the sun. On the spiritual plane, it thus makes sense that if the spiritual sun is darkened by our actions or lack of love, the spiritual moon will be darkened. Since the earliest times, stars have been likened to knowledge. Reading the stars was a science among the ancients. When love darkens and faith loses its light, it follows that the stars will fall from the heavens. The loss of love leads to a loss of wisdom; darkness covers the way of faith, and without the stars, we lose the ability to chart the course of life's voyage.

Lastly, let's not overlook a quote found in *AR 331*: "...when the state of the church is perverted **anywhere** and there is **change**, there is an **earthquake**...these things are to be understood as being done in the spiritual world...not in the natural world..." (emphasis added). Implied in this quote is an "end, cause, and effect" challenge to the church and each individual within the church. We need to keep the sun of heaven shining brightly. We need to seek out the Lord's wisdom so the moon of our faith reflects the truths of the Word. Anything less perverts and pushes for changes in the alignment of the stars.

I can't imagine how horrible and devastated our natural world would be without the sun, moon, and stars. Disorientation, psychotic feelings of hopelessness, and death would overtake life quickly. What must it be like within someone's spiritual life when they purposefully choose to exclude the Lord from their daily life?

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 2:10*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. With a dozen direct quotes from the Writings, it appears that we should have little trouble understanding the meaning of *Joel 2:10*. Was this your experience? What did you get from this verse?
2. How much do you think the events of the world have caused "quakes" in the spiritual world, or vice versa?

3. When we make church policies, have you ever wondered about the long-term effects these policies might have on the life of the church? How can we guard against setting into motion things that might eclipse the sun of heaven?
4. The choice to exclude the Lord from our lives was addressed in our study of *Joel 2:10*. Have you come up with a mental picture of the darkness this causes within?
5. Having asked that question, let's examine what we can do to protect the sun, moon, and stars of our spiritual life. Can a daily study regimen do us good? Will application of doctrine to life do it?
6. Lastly, the Writings teach us that thinking from END to CAUSE to EFFECT is the correct way to follow the Lord. Thinking from EFFECT to CAUSE to END is the wrong way. Why would this be so?

JOEL 2:11

"The Lord gives voice before His army, for His camp is very great; for strong is the One who executes His word. For the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; who can endure it?"

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "The Lord will fight with them."

AC 4236 [3]

- "That the 'camp of God' denotes heaven may...be seen in Joel...2:10-11..."

AC 7573 [2]

- "...'the voice of Jehovah' denotes truth Divine, which enlightens and perfects those who are in good, and terrifies and devastates those who are in evil." *Joel 2:10-11* is cited as an example.

AR 862

- "That 'a camp' in the spiritual sense signifies all things of the church which have relation to its truths and goods...That by 'an army' in the Word are signified the truths and goods of the church, also its falsities and evils..." *Joel 2:10-11* is cited as an example.

AC 3448 [6]

- "...where the coming of the Lord is treated of...His 'army' denotes truths Divine. It is from this, and also because the Lord alone fights for man against the hells which are in the continual effort to assault him, that in the Word the Lord is so often called 'Jehovah Zebaoth,' God Zebaoth,' the 'Lord Zebaoth,' that is, 'of armies,'..." *Joel 2:11* is among the various passages cited.

AC 9926 [6]

- In *Joel 2:11*, "'the voice'...denotes Divine truth, consequently the Word of the Lord..."

AC 9987 [4]

- "...all truth which is from the Divine is called the 'word,' as in *Joel...2:11*... where the 'voice which Jehovah utters' denotes truth from the Divine...the 'camp of Jehovah' denotes heaven...From this it is evident that 'countless is he that doeth His word' denotes one who does truth Divine."

Doctrine of the Lord 14 [4 & 5]

- "Their 'strong ones,' and 'enemies,' are the hells, for all there feel hatred against the Lord. His advent into the world for this purpose is meant by, 'that day is to the Lord Jehovih Zebaoth a day of vengeance, that He may take vengeance of His enemies.'" *Joel 2:11* is mentioned as an example.

AR 37

- "...'a great voice,' when heard from heaven, signifies the Divine truth..." *Joel 2:11* is cited as an example.

AR 447

- "Since the goods and truths of heaven and the church are signified by 'the hosts (armies) of the heavens,' the Lord is therefore called 'JEHOVAH ZEBAOth,' that is, Jehovah of armies (hosts)..." *Joel 2:11* is cited.

AE 261 [4]

- "In *Joel...2:11*...That Divine truth here is 'the voice of Jehovah' is evident, as in many places."

AE 414

- "...in Joel...2:11...'to stand,' like walking and sitting, in the Word signifies to be and to live; and 'to stand,' has a similar meaning with to stand firm and stand still."

AE 573 [5]

- "That the angels are called 'hosts' is evident from the following passages. In Joel...2:11...The angels gathered together, or a company of them, is called 'a host,' because 'the angels,' the same as 'hosts,' signify Divine truths and goods, because they are recipients of these from the Lord..."

Derived Doctrine

It would appear from the number of direct teachings we have for this passage that there is no need for us to seek additional help from derived doctrine. Therefore, we will move on to "putting it all together."

Putting It All Together

P&P states, "**The Lord will fight with them.**" Who are the "them" mentioned in this verse?

- The hells are "them."
- Those who feel hatred toward the Lord are "them."
- Those who oppose His advent are "them."
- Those who are in a continual effort to assault the Word of the Lord are "them."
- The 'strong ones' and 'enemies' are the 'them' who cannot endure the Lord's army.

What forces will the Lord draw together to wage war against "them," and what will be the result of this war?

- His "voice," which is truth Divine, will enlighten and perfect those who are in good and truth.
- His "voice" will devastate and terrify those who are in evil.
- The Lord's "camp," His church, will become His "army." The "camp" and its "army" will have the finest armament of goods and truths.
- Angels, the hosts, whose faces look to the Lord and receive instruction from Him, will assist the church in the fight against "them."

Those of us who feel hell is out of control and running amok in this world need to recall the words the Lord spoke in *Joshua 23:6*. He presents a powerful challenge to

choose this day whom we shall serve: **"Therefore be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, lest you turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left...hold fast to the Lord your God..."**

We need to remain confident that hell ("them") will be devastated, that they will tremble and not endure when the day of the Lord comes. **For the "voice" of the Lord has said so.**

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 2:11*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Can you imagine the voice of the Lord calling together His army? Can you see the order of the camp? Do you remember Balaam's reaction when he was on the mountain looking down on the order and arrangement of the tribes of Israel? The order of the encampment prevented him from pronouncing a curse on Israel.
2. The hellish forces, misjudging their strength and ability to overthrow the Lord, come to a devastating end. When will they, when will we, learn that hell has no power in the presence of the Lord?
3. Did this verse boost your level of courage? Did it make you feel the worth of fighting against "them"?
4. "This day is to the Lord Jehovih Zebaoth a day of vengeance, that He may take vengeance of His enemies" (*Doctrine of the Lord 14 [4 & 5]*). Do these words comfort the "army" and strike fear in "them"?

JOEL 2:12-17

"Now, therefore," says the Lord, "turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and mourning." So rend your heart, and not your garments; return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm. Who knows if He will turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him—a grain offering and a drink offering for the Lord your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion, consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly; gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children and nursing babes; let the bridegroom go out from his chamber, and the bride from her dressing room. Let the priests, who minister to the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar; Let them say, 'spare Your people, O Lord, and do not give Your heritage to reproach, that the

nations should rule over them. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Exhortation to be converted to Him, to repent, and to be wise."

AC 588 [3]

- "'Repentings' plainly denote great mercy. So in Joel...2:13...where also to 'repent' manifestly denotes mercy."

AC 598 [3]

- "That there is a distinction in the Word between 'mercy' and 'grace' is evident from many passages where Jehovah is called 'merciful and gracious' (as in... Joel 2:13)...That 'grace' relates to spiritual things, which are of faith, or of the understanding...and that 'mercy' relates to celestial things which are of love, or of the will..."

AC 10441 [4 & 5]

- "...Jehovah is said to have 'repented,' when yet it cannot be that He repents, because He knows all things before He does them; from which it is evident that by 'repenting' is signified mercy...That 'repenting,' when said of Jehovah, denotes mercy, is plain in...Joel 2:13..."

AC 10577 [2]

- "That 'to show grace' denotes to endow with spiritual truth and good, and 'to show mercy' to endow with celestial truth and good, is because 'grace' is predicated of faith, and 'mercy' of love; and...those who are in the Lord's spiritual kingdom speak of 'grace;' and those who are in the Lord's celestial kingdom speak of 'mercy'...Unless there were such a difference between grace and mercy, it would not have been said, 'show grace' and 'show mercy.' From this it is that Jehovah is called 'gracious and merciful.'" *Joel 2:13* is cited as an example.

AE 340 [17]

- "In Joel...2:14...'blessing' signifies spiritual blessing, which in general has reference to good and truth proceeding from the Lord and given to man, therefore it is said, 'He will leave behind Him a blessing, a meal-offering and a

drink-offering to our God,' 'the meal-offering,' which was bread, signifying good, and 'the drink-offering,' which was wine, signifying truth, both from the Lord, for it is said, 'from our God.'"

AC 5608 [7 & 9]

- "In Joel...2:15, 16...'elders' denotes the wise; 'babes and those that suck the breasts,' the innocent...Man is so created that when he grows old and becomes like a little child, the innocence of wisdom conjoins itself with the innocence of ignorance which he had in infancy, and so he passes into the other life as a true infant."

AR 797

- "By 'a bridegroom,' in the highest sense, is meant the Lord as to the Divine good; and by 'a bride' the church is meant as to the Divine truth from the Lord." *Joel 2:16* is cited among many other passages from the Word.

AE 1189

- "...so 'bridegroom and the bride' mean the conjunction of the Lord with the church, and also the conjunction of good and truth. Because all spiritual joy is from that conjunction, it follows that 'the voice of the bridegroom and the bride' signifies the joy therefrom. Moreover, the angels have all their wisdom and intelligence, and thus all their joy and happiness from that conjunction... This is the signification of 'the voice of the bridegroom and bride,'..." *Joel 2:16* is cited.

Doctrine of Sacred Scripture 86

- "That repetitions of the same thing occur in the Word on account of the marriage of good and truth, may be seen quite clearly from passages where 'nations' and 'peoples' are mentioned..." *Joel 2:17* is cited.

AR 483

- "That 'peoples' signify those who are in truths or falsities of doctrine, and 'nations' signify those who are in goods or in evils of life, may appear from many passages in the Word...Where 'peoples' and 'nations' are mentioned together...'peoples' relate to truth, and 'nations' to good." *Joel 2:17* is cited.

TCR 251

- "Nations and peoples are mentioned together, because by nations those are meant who are in good, and in the opposite sense those who are evil; and by

'peoples' those are meant who are in truths...Therefore those who are of the Lord's spiritual kingdom are called 'peoples,' and those who are of the Lord's celestial kingdom are called 'nations;...' *Joel 2:17* is cited as one of many representative passages.

Derived Doctrine

"Now, therefore, says the Lord, turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and mourning."

- Is "now" used as a means to mark a transition from one thought to the next? Or is "now" used with a sense of immediacy? The present time is always a good time to begin changing.
- To "turn" signifies to begin a period of reflection upon revelation, to diverge from what one had previously been thinking (*AC 6836*).
- "Turn to Me" is a Divine directive from the Lord. The Lord is asking people to turn from thinking about themselves to thinking about the Lord, and to do so with all of their heart or love.
- "Fasting" signifies doing something to get over an unhappy state when good is no longer conjoined with truths (*AC 9182 [10]*).
- "Weeping" signifies both sorrow and joy (*AC 5773*). Thus, we need to be sorry for the periods of our life when there was a separation or removal of truths and feel consolation, or joy, when truths are restored to our life by the Lord.
- "Weeping and mourning" signify the grief of the soul and grief of heart; for weeping and mourning are representatives of the loss of truth and good (*AE 1164*).

"So rend your heart, and not your garments..."

- "Rending" signifies mourning on account of the destruction of truth or the absence of faith (*AC 4763*). It also signifies mourning because of the deprivation of Divine good and Divine truth (*AC 9960*).
- One's "heart" signifies the will. *AC 3813 [4]* reminds us that the Own (proprium) residing in the heart needs to be emptied out so that it can be vivified. Ridding ourselves of the human proprium and taking on the Lord's Proprium is a necessary work of regeneration. See *Doctrine of Life 95-97*.
- "Garments" in the positive sense represent truth in its lowest form. "Garments" represent the truths of memory such as appear in the Word. See *AC 9372 [8]*. Are these truths what is meant in this passage?

"Return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness..."

- "Grace" and "mercy" were explained in *AC 598 [3]*. "Grace" relates to spiritual things, which are of faith and the understanding, and "mercy" relates to

celestial things which are of love and the will. How do we get grace and mercy? By returning to the Lord with a willingness of heart and a sense of humility.

- "Slow" signifies successive states of preparation (*AC 4381*). "Anger" signifies in the highest sense the zeal of the Lord to protect and save. The work of the Lord to overcome evil is a slow and successive preparation. It is a plan that will root out all the tentacles of hell with a zealous love for His flock.
- The "kindness," or unfailing love, of the Lord signifies the protection afforded by His interior and superior truths (*AC 4391*).

"...and he relents from doing harm."

- Please read *AC 587*. The Lord only appears to relent as He sees and provides all things from eternity. The Lord intends nothing but good. Evil resisting the Lord's good ways calls His providential leading "doing harm." Evil projects itself in its image of the Lord, viewing His actions as interference with the way it seeks to have free rein and avoid abiding in His truth.

"Who knows if He will turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him—a grain offering and a drink offering for the Lord your God?"

- Every day, in thousands of ways, the Lord's Providence gifts us with blessings. Most of the Lord's blessings slip by our conscious sense of awareness. It's only later while looking back on our life that we see dimly a finite portion of the loving ways the Lord blessed our life. Our lack of perception doesn't stop the Divine benefactions. They flow on like a mighty river, carrying us in the "stream of Providence." Like the Psalmist, we can say "My cup runs over."
- A "grain offering" signifies interior goods and truths (*AC 7112*).
- "Drink" signifies a spirit of inquiry to investigate things belonging to faith (*AC 1071*). "Drink" signifies to inquire whether truth can be conjoined or appropriated (*AC 3089*).
- "Who knows" is a question that can broaden our spiritual awe of the Lord's love for us.

"Blow the trumpet in Zion, consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly..."

- A "trumpet" or horn signifies Divine truth about to be revealed out of heaven (*AE 55 and 502*).
- "Zion" signifies the advent of the Lord and the establishment of the church by Him among those who are in the good of love (*AE 433 [8]*).
- To "consecrate" represents to prepare oneself for the Lord and to receive truth by good from Him (*AC 10111*).
- Fasting with consecrated efforts requires taking a spiritual inventory to see what spiritual goods and truths are lacking in life and application to uses.

- "Assembly" signifies to set things in order, for goods and truths cannot be assembled if they are lacking order (AC 6338). A "sacred assembly" speaks clearly about what kind of order is needed.

"...gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children and nursing babes..."

- To "gather" signifies to store up truths in the memory (AC 679). To "gather" or "assemble" signifies to excite to do combat (AR 707). To "gather" or "collect" signifies to procure (AC 6451).
- By "gather the people" is signified the gathering of truths. Depending on the meaning of the internal sense, "people" can represent evil truths or good truths (AR 483).
- Elders, children, and nursing babes are discussed in AC 5608 [7 & 9].

"...let the bridegroom go out from his chamber..."

- AC 4638 [4] describes the meaning of "bridegroom" as the Lord coming for judgment. AR 797 teaches that "in the highest sense," a bridegroom represents the Lord as to Divine good.
- A "chamber" signifies the church as to its goods (AC 3900 [1]).
- AC 9927 gives us a clue about the meaning of "going in and going out." Whatever belongs to motion, such as "walking," "going," or "advancing," signifies a state of life. "Going out" among "the ancients was a customary form of speaking to say that they knew a person's coming in and his going out, or his entrance and his departure, when they meant that they knew every state of his life." Thus, they were talking about knowing the quality of a person's good and truth in worship, and the thoughts and affections that flowed from worship into life. Now let's apply this knowledge to the Lord. He knows our "coming in" and our "going out" with respect to His "judgment" as the bridegroom.

"...and the bride from her dressing room."

- A "bride" signifies the proprium being made new and vivified by the Lord (AC 155). A bridegroom signifies the Lord as to divine good, and a bride signifies the church as to divine truth from Him (AR 797).
- A "dressing room" is a place where one puts on clothes that are appropriate for the occasion. In this case, the bride is there to put on her wedding clothes. "A 'wedding garment' signifies the intelligence of the spiritual man, which is from the knowledges of truth and good; but 'he that had not on a wedding garment' signifies a hypocrite, who by a moral life counterfeits the spiritual life..." (AE 195 [11])
- "Clothing" signifies memory-knowledges that support one's external life (AC 9003).

- To "clothe" a person signifies to instruct that person in truths (*AE 240 [4]*).
- NB: Clothing serves as a kind of protection for the body, keeping us warm and helping us to look more attractive than we would without it. In the same way, our minds can be clothed and protected by good and truth. The Lord's Word makes our minds much more interesting and attractive!
- The word "from" in this phrase ("from her dressing room") calls our attention to *AC 9927* again. "Motion" signifies a state of life, and also the quality of good and truth in one's worship and application to life.

"Let the priests, who minister to the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar..."

- "Let" means allow, permit, don't impede, don't obstruct, give, and offer assistance to another person.
- "Priests" are to represent the Lord as to the Divine good in the work of salvation (*AC 9809*). The priests of Aaron and his sons, and the Levites, represent the work of salvation in successive order (*AC 10017*). Priests are to teach truth, and so lead to the good, and to the Lord (*AC 10794*).
- To "minister" signifies to serve and to mediate (*AC 9419*). To "minister" signifies to serve as a representative of the Lord (*AC 9809*). To "minister" signifies worship and preaching (*AC 9925*). To "minister" means to be called into **warfare** or **military service** because to minister represents the Lord's work of salvation in removing evils and falsities from hell that are continually fighting against goods and truths (*AE 734 [14]*).
- "Weeping" in the positive sense signifies the Lord's love and mercy. It is also a sign of the Lord's grief on account of the "night" state among His people as to the truths of faith in the church. See *AC 2910*. "Weeping" signifies both sorrow and joy (*AC 5873*).
- A "porch" signifies exterior truths that lead to interior things (*AC 7353*). A "vestibule" signifies truths leading to goods, which in turn reveal more interior truths (*AC 9659 [5]*).
- An "altar" signifies the Lord and the holy element in worshipping Him (*AC 4541*). An "altar" signifies the falsities from evil, which are to be dissipated (*AC 10642*). An "altar" signifies the preparation of the Lord's Human Divine for undergoing the last degrees of temptation (*AC 2811*). Lastly, this idea regarding an altar of incense: it signifies the grateful hearing and reception by the Lord of all the elements of worship that are from love and charity (*AC 10176*).
- Weeping **between** the porch and the altar signifies having preparation for conjunction of truth and good (*AC 10237a*).

"Let them say, 'spare Your people, O Lord, and do not give Your heritage to reproach, that the nations should rule over them...'"

- Let (permit) them to say...To "say" sometimes signifies "to perceive" and sometimes "to think" because saying involves both (*AC 2619*).

- "Spare" signifies intercession from love (AC 2253) and also salvation (AC 2262). "Spare" signifies the destruction of falsities before they are confirmed (AE 573 [11]).
- "Heritage" signifies the truths of the good in the natural man (AE 714 [25]).
- "Reproach" is translated as shame or disgrace. "Shame" signifies lacking the power to resist evils and falsities (AC 10481). "Shame" signifies having no power to resist evils from the proprium (AE 654 [59]). "Shame" is said to those who will be of the Lord's New Church to encourage them to learn truths and to retain them (AR 706).
- "Nations from afar," although not the exact wording of our passage, has an interesting signification. It signifies falsity from evil, or that of the sensuous person, destroying truths (AE 724 [27]). "Nations" signify evils of the will, or lusts, while "people" signify falsities of the understanding, or persuasions (AC 622).
- To "rule" signifies having a degree of dominion. What kind? Is it the dominion of freedom from the Lord or the dominion of slavery from hell?

"Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"

- A believer's **understanding** alone is incomplete and subject to a host of false conclusions. Love and wisdom, working together, make it possible for us to achieve a conjunction with the Lord. "People" signify falsities or persuasions from the understanding. So, based on this understanding, we can perhaps see why the people came up with the question: "Where is their God?" The Lord taught us in the Beatitudes "Blessed (Happy) are the pure in heart for **they shall see God.**" Two people looking at the same scripture—one a believer and one an unbeliever—will not see the same thing. The believer will say "there is God!" The unbeliever will say "where is your God? I don't see Him."

Putting It All Together

P&P sums up the prophecy of *Joel 2:12-17* by saying it is an "Exhortation to be converted to Him, to repent, and to be wise."

This is a directive from the Lord and not Joel. The directive comes with a mission plan:

1. Turn to the Lord with all your heart. This is a call for our total commitment to the Lord.
2. The command to consecrate a fast means we are to take an inventory of the spiritual resources at our disposal. If a significant shortage is detected, we need to weep and mourn over the deficiencies found. But then something has to be done to restock. We need to supplicate the Lord for His help. We need to desire a new life with new resources.

3. Rending one's heart and not one's garments is a call to do the work of the Lord from substance and not form. This can also be seen as a call for action and not words. We are to walk the walk of love and not the walk of talk.
4. Why should people return to the Lord? His way is gracious and merciful. His way is not the way of anger. It is a way of great kindness. Hell loves all that is ungracious and unmerciful. Hell's way is full of anger and has a plan of destructive domination.
5. Be prepared. Enlist in the military service of the Lord and His church. Hell will engage us in warfare. Don't fear the battle. The Lord's Intelligence and Love is sufficient to battle all disorders.
6. In preparation for what is to come, gather together the love of innocence and the wisdom of innocence so that a marriage, or conjugal conjunction, may take place.
7. The pure in heart shall see God. That which is invisible will become visible.
8. Those who see the Lord have the assurance that they will not be among the lost and confused who ask "Where is your God?" The committed soldier of the Lord knows the ways of the Lord and confidently walks in them.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 2:12-17*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Does the Lord's plan ask too much of us? Is it possible for us to give Him our whole heart, mind, and soul?
2. Self-examination, making one's self guilty, supplicating the Lord for help, and living a new life are the components of a well-known process we are taught about in the Writings. This portion of Joel certainly illustrates that it is a consistent plan of the Lord's. The Writings urge us to follow this plan once or twice a year just prior to Holy Supper. Do we follow this suggested plan?
3. *AE 734 [14]* calls for our enlistment in the Lord's military service. He advises us that warfare will incur. I did not hear in His plan a call for negotiations. It is to be a battle where only one outcome is predicted. The Lord will overcome the hells. Do we ever try to "bargain" or negotiate a peaceful settlement with hell? What is the result?

4. The gift of seeing God is a promise in the declaration of the New Church. That which is invisible will become visible. Do you find the Lord is clearly seen at all times, or do you find it necessary to keep refreshing your view of the Lord? How do you do this? *TCR* mentions that the Word of the Lord is like a mirror in which we see the image of the Lord. Such a teaching makes it a necessity to read the Word with a degree of consistency. Our hope is that a project such as this one will assist in your pursuit of daily "mirrors" in which to see God.
5. Do you come in contact with those who ask "Where is your God?" What happens when you do?

JOEL 2:18-19

"Then the Lord will be zealous for His land, and pity His people. The Lord will answer and say to His people, 'Behold, I will send you grain and new wine and oil, and you will be satisfied by them; I will no longer make you a reproach among the nations.'"

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "The Lord will establish the church, to which He will give its goods and truths..."

AC 8875 [1, 6, & 7]

- "...the zeal of the Lord, which in itself is love and compassion, appears to [those in falsity] as anger; for when the Lord from love and mercy protects His own in heaven, they who are in evil are indignant and angry against the good and rush...with the endeavor to destroy...'the zeal of the house of Jehovah' denotes His love toward those who receive good and truth...the zeal of the Lord protects the good..." *Joel 2:18* is cited among other passages as an example of this truth.

AE 433 [27]

- "...it can be seen how far from the truth those have wandered, who believe that at the end of time the Jews will be converted to the Lord and brought back into the land of Canaan...because they have known nothing of the spiritual sense of the Word...In these passages those also are meant who were to be brought into the church, and thence into heaven from the earth after the Lord came, not only where the Christian religion is received but everywhere else. *Joel 2:18-27* is cited among many other passages.

Derived Doctrine

"Then the Lord will be zealous for His land, and pity His people."

- AC 8875 teaches that "zealous" means love and compassion. "Land" represents where the doctrine of love and charity reside in the church (AC 2571). "Land" also represents the internal spiritual person, for that is where the church is (AE 365 [41]).
- "Pity" or "compassion" signifies the inflow of charity from the Lord (AC 6737). "Compassion" signifies the influx of the Lord into those who are ignorant of truths and yet desire them (AC 9182 [7]).

"The Lord will answer and say to His people..."

- "Answer" has some very interesting representations. "Answer" signifies reciprocity when assent is given (AC 2919). "Answer" signifies influx, inspiration, perception, and information. "Answer" also signifies mercy and aid. See AE 295 [6] and AE 471 [2].
- When we read in the Word that "Jehovah said," it signifies that He perceives from the Divine Celestial (AC 2619). When "said" is predicated of Jehovah, it signifies to inform by divine truth from the literal sense of the Word (AC 8041).

"Behold, I will send you grain and new wine and oil..."

- The word "behold" means to have or to keep in sight, to look at, to watch, to observe, or survey and discern. Which of these synonyms should we use when seeking the signification of behold? AC 2329, 2770, 3495, and 3711 all use one or more of these words to say they represent thought and reflection, acknowledgment and confession of the Lord. Proper "beholding" brings us into the presence of the Lord.
- "Send" signifies something being revealed by the Lord through heaven to those who are in the good of love (AE 8 [2] and AR 5).
- "Grain," "barley," "wheat," and the like denote interior truths and goods (AC 7112).
- AC 3941 [4] quotes Joel 1:10, 11, 13: "The field has been laid waste, the ground has been mourning because the grain has been laid waste, the new wine has failed, the oil languishes. It is evident to anyone that here the state of the church when it is vastated is what is described... 'the field,' 'the ground' means the church, the 'grain' its good, and the 'new wine' its truth."
- "Oil" has many uses. There is oil for cooking, oil for anointing, and oil for lamps. In general, "oil" signifies the good of love or charity to the neighbor from the Lord (AC 10, AC 261, and AE 375 [24-26]).
- Is it a surprise to you that the Lord sends new "grain," new "wine," and new "oil" when He establishes His new church? The former church ended with the

four kinds of locust ravenously stripping the land. There was a drying up of the grain, the wine, and the oil. There was turmoil and shock the likes of which had never been seen. Then came a new beginning with the Lord's zeal providing for the new start for His church. Look now at the next part of this verse.

"And you will be satisfied by them."

- To be "satisfied" signifies to enjoy peace and good from mercy (*AE 146*). "Satisfy" signifies that all spiritual nourishment is from the Lord and that as much is given as one wills (*AC 8410*).

"I will no longer make you a reproach among nations."

- To remove "reproach" signifies that the affection of internal truth will no longer be barren or dead (*AC 3969*). The Lord promised the removal of shame and disgrace from the church. The torn, the tattered, the tired elements of the church were going to be removed—replaced with a new vitality by the Lord. Dignity, respectability, honor, and wholesomeness would infill the doctrines and all of the forms of worship and uses.

Putting It All Together

P&P summarizes the meaning of *Joel 2:18-19* with these words:

"The Lord will establish the church, to which He will give its goods and truths..."

The direct teachings and the derived doctrine add a degree of warmth, compassion, zeal, protection, mercy, feeding, and restoration and a grand sense of hope to this summary from *P&P*. In place of the swarming locust and the barren fields in Chapter One, this portion of the prophecy offers the news that there will be a full crop of grain, new wine, and flowing oil once again.

As with every Old Testament prophet we study, Joel's prophecy begins with a bleak synopsis of the trouble the church got itself into by ignoring, twisting, and misusing the literal sense of the Word. As a consequence of this failure to learn from the literal sense, the heart of the church lost its conjunction with the Lord and, blinded, couldn't find its way to the light of heaven. Falsity needed to be emptied out. The church had to confess its evils as sins against the Lord. The church needed to admit its guilt and genuinely supplicate the Lord for help. Most importantly, the church had to want the new life that was based on the Lord's way.

Satisfaction is promised by the Lord. There will be an enjoyment of peace and good from the Lord's mercy. Reproaches will not follow the revitalized church. Nurturing will be accommodated to the individual level and need of all in the church.

Wholesomeness of doctrine and uses will flow out of the hearts of the people in the Lord's New Church.

As I wrote these things, I felt a sense of joy and hope that I might be part of such a grand awakening and restoration of the church. How about you? Did you want to say "How long O Lord?" Well, maybe our prayerful wish for these things to come to pass is an important step within the stream of Providence. It could be that the Lord wants more of us to feel this way so that He can usher in a church whose grain, wine, and oil is definitely new.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 2:18-19*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Did you find yourself challenged with a sense of hope and consolation?
2. Was the bleak theme of the opening chapter replaced with a new song of "This is the day that the Lord has made"?
3. New grain, new wine, and new oil—does any example of these gifts come to mind?
4. What kind of "putting it all together" would you have written for this section?

JOEL 2:20

"But I will remove far from you the northern army, and will drive him away into a barren and desolate land, with his face toward the eastern sea and his back toward the western sea; his stench will come up, and his foul odor will rise, because he has done monstrous things."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "...and will remove falsities of evil, and thus hell."

AE 422 [16]

- "In that day signifies His coming, and the 'eastern sea' signifies the last limit toward the east in the spiritual world, at which there was no reception of Divine truth before the Lord's coming, but where there was reception when Divine truth proceeded from His Divine Human. That the ultimates in the spiritual world are like seas may be seen above (n. 342b, c); and that there are dry places and wastes there may be seen in Joel (2:20)."

Coronis 56

- "From all these passages [*Joel 2:20* is one of them] it may be seen what 'vastation' and 'desolation' are; and that it is not a vastation and desolation of the peoples of a land, and of cities, but of the goods and truths of the church, whence there is nothing but evils and falsities."

Derived Doctrine

"But I will remove far from you the northern army..."

- Please note the definite sense of the opening. It is not "I may," nor is it "I might," but it is "I will." This same definiteness is carried throughout the whole of this twentieth verse of *Joel*.
- To "move" signifies to turn away from error (*AC 6290*). To "move" also means to "cut off."
- "Far" in the spiritual world is not marked off in measurable distances. Instead, it represents **a remoteness of spirit** (*AC 9261*). Thus, it seems the Lord is teaching us that evil and falsity will be removed from His church. They will be pushed to the remote or furthest limits of heaven.
- "Army," in the positive sense, signifies the truths and goods that protect the church. "Army," in the negative sense, represents the self-justifying falsities and evils that destroy the church. See *AR 862*. *AE 573 [2]* gives us the same representation.
- "Northern" signifies those who are out of the church and in darkness as to the truths of faith, and also the relative darkness in people (*AC 1605*). "Northern" signifies what is sensuous and natural (*AC 426 [2]*). "Northern" signifies those who are in obscurity as to truth because they do not have the Word (*AE 401 [28]*).

"...and [I] will drive him away into a barren and desolate land."

- "Drive" signifies to put away with strength and power (*AC 7189*). To "drive away" signifies that evil and falsities will be separated from every truth of the church (*AC 386*).

- "Barren," in a positive sense, represents those who recognize they are not in the Word and long for its truths. In the negative sense, "barren" represents a picture of evil and falsities in an idolatrous worship with no capacity to reproduce itself any further. See AC 1371-1372.
- "Desolate" signifies evil without any visible truth (AC 6141).
- "Land" represents the church, the internal man, and the doctrine of love and charity where the faith of the church resides (AC 2571).
- And who is the "I" in this verse? The Lord God Jesus Christ, the One God of heaven and earth.

"...with his face toward the eastern sea and his back toward the western sea..."

- "Face" signifies the interior things, or thoughts and affections within the internal man. The Lord beholds the internal face and not the external face. See AC 4299.
- "Face toward the eastern sea..." represents the last limits in the spiritual world where there was no reception of Divine truth prior to the coming of the Lord (AE 422 [16]). Could these words represent the falsities that were brought into the spiritual world prior to the advent of the Lord? The thick dark clouds of falsity, prior to the advent, entering in from the World of Spirits, needed to be turned away from the face of all people. The true east became clear when the Lord made His advent. He came to show heaven and earth the true, inner, source of light from the East.
- "Sea" signifies a collection of spiritual and natural knowledges in the memory (AC 28 and AC 991).
- "Back," in the positive sense, signifies the externals of the Word, the church, and worship (AC 10584). "Back" signifies the subordination of voluntary (love) things (AC 8194). In the negative sense, "back" signifies a denial of the Lord God, and this was one of the abominations of the decadent Jerusalem (AE 401 [32]). "Back" signifies departing from truth by not wanting to understand the Word (AC 6401).
- "West" signifies those who are in self-love and interior thick darkness who think themselves wise (SE 5676). "West" signifies faith separated from charity because of the evils of life (AE 316 [16]). AC 7702 describes "...the signification of a 'sea' or west 'wind' as being the cessation of Divine influx through heaven..."

"...his stench will come up, and his foul odor will rise, because he has done monstrous things."

- Those who oppose the Lord and His truth give off an odor of decay (death), a stink, a stench of aversion and abomination (AC 4516).
- The "foul odor", in the Writings, is coupled with the word "cupidities." "Foul" is linked with cesspools, excrement, and many other horrible stenches. Essentially, the "foul" hells are made up of people who have wholly engrossed

themselves in the pursuit of their own pleasure. See *AC 1, 285, and 540* for examples of the "foul."

- "Monstrous things," or forms, are graphically presented in the Writings by faces. There are faces that are devoid of life. There are faces that are sunken, faces twisted because of their hatred toward the Lord, faces that take on the forms of hatred, cruelty, deceit, adultery, and hypocrisy. But in their own light, the spirits with these grotesque faces see themselves as attractive because of their own fantasies (*AC 4798*). Sadly, these monstrous forms want to get away from the Lord, so they cast themselves headlong into hell. The deeper the hell, the better. See *AC 5057*.

Putting It All Together

In light of this verse, is there any doubt about what the Lord **will** do for His church?

1. He will remove the northern army far from the church. The Lord will remove the self-justifying falsities and evils that destroy a church. Those who turned their back to the true East will have their shallow wisdom exposed.
2. The Lord promises to remove the non-productive things of idolatry that carry with them no potential usefulness for the future. Idolatry and barrenness are a spiritually sad end—cause—effect choice of the heart and mind.
3. Without the Lord's advent, the collection of knowledges (seas) would have held the minds of people in a state of denial regarding the Lord. Without the Lord, there would have been a "wanting" to know and understand the Word without fulfillment of this desire.
4. Without the day of the Lord and His judgment, the dead church would have continued giving off its stench of aversion, abomination, and self-serving cupidities. These attitudes and ways of life put on the face of respectability, but they represented a fantasy world. The Lord saw the reality of their faces. To His eyes, their faces were masks of monstrous forms of hatred, cruelty, deceit, adultery, and hypocrisy. Before the Lord's advent, those who lived contrary to the Lord lived "wholly engrossed in the pursuit of their own pleasure." No more. It is over. How do we know this will be so? The great "I will" has said so, and He keeps His word.

Read and Reflect

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 2:20*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Is there any doubt in your mind that the end of the dead church has come about and that a New Church will come?
2. What monstrous masks are you aware of? Do you think these masks continue to fool people into mistaking them for forms of respectability?
3. *AC 5056* said something sad about those who vehemently oppose the Lord. They cast themselves into hell. The deeper the hell, the better. Can you picture someone so opposed to the Lord that they would choose the deepest hell? That is a lot of hate.
4. Is there a growing sense of the "good news" for the church in our study of *Joel*? Are we finished hearing about the disorders of the church? Do you suppose we might have some more overturning of church disorders before a flurry of positive things finishing the prophecy of *Joel*?
5. Well, looking ahead to the next five verses, we can expect more good news about the restoration of the internal church. "Fear not," "Be glad," and "Rejoice" are some of the messages ahead. Are we ready for these encouraging words from the Lord to help us with our travails?

JOEL 2:21-25

"Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice, for the Lord has done marvelous things! Do not be afraid, you beasts of the field; for the open pastures are springing up, and the tree bears its fruit; the fig tree and the vine yield their strength. Be glad then, you children of Zion. And rejoice in the Lord your God; for He has given you the former rain faithfully, and He will cause the rain to come down for you—the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month. The threshing floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil. So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the crawling locust, the consuming locust and the chewing locust, My great army which I sent among you."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "They will have trust in the Lord, from which they will have goods and felicities"

AE 660 [4]

- "In all these passages, 'exultation' signifies delight from love and from the affection of good, and 'gladness' signifies pleasure from the love and affection of truth." *Joel 2:21* is cited.

AR 567

- "...the affections of a man, in the spiritual world, appear at a distance as beasts, as has been stated before; and beasts, considered in themselves, are nothing but forms of natural affections, but men are not only forms of natural, but of spiritual affections...That men, as to their affections, are meant by 'beasts,' may appear from these passages..." *Joel 2:21-22* is cited.

AE 650 [39]

- "In [*Joel 2:21-23*]...This is said of the establishment of the church by the Lord; and the 'earth which will fear, but rejoice and be glad' signifies the church and its delight; its establishment by the Lord is signified by 'Jehovah hath done great things;' therefore 'the beasts of His fields' mean those who are in the affections of good and long for instruction from the Word, 'beasts' meaning those who are in the affections of good belonging to the natural man, and 'fields' the doctrinals from the Word."

Coronis 3 [2]

- "That the states of the church are likewise described in the Word by beasts... is evident from numberless passages...[*Joel 2:21* and *22* are cited.]...Hence it is that 'beasts' are so often named in the Word; and by them in the spiritual sense are signified affections, inclinations, perceptions, and thoughts."

AC 46

- "That 'beasts' signify man's affections—evil affections with the evil, and good affections with the good—is evident from numerous passages in the Word..."*Joel 2:22* is cited.

AC 217

- "...in *Joel...2:22*...The 'vine' here denotes spiritual good, and the 'fig-tree' natural good."

AC 7571 [2]

- "...‘pastures of herb’ denote the spiritual nourishment which is of the soul..." *Joel 2:22*, along with other passages, is cited as an example.

AE 109 [5]

- "Moreover, the things that are on trees, as leaves and fruit, signify such things as are with man; ‘leaves,’ the truths with him, and ‘fruits,’ the goods, as in the following passages..." *Joel 2:22* is cited.

AE 403 [7]

- "In [*Joel 2:22*]...This treats of the establishment of the church, therefore ‘the beasts of the field’ do not mean beasts of the field, but the affections of good in the natural man, consequently those in whom are such affections. Who does not see that it cannot be beasts to whom it is said, ‘Fear not, ye beasts of My fields?’ ‘The habitations of the desert are made full of herbs’ signifies that with such there will be knowledges of truth where there were none before, ‘the habitations of the wilderness’ meaning the interiors of the mind of those in whom these did not exist before, ‘full of herbs’ signifying the increase and multiplication of these; ‘for the tree beareth her fruit, the fig-tree and the vine shall yield their strength,’ signifies that they have natural good and spiritual good, ‘strength’ here meaning the production of fruit."

AC 5113 [13]

- "As in the genuine sense a ‘vine’ signifies the good of the intellectual part, and a ‘fig-tree’ the good of the natural man, or what is the same, that a ‘vine’ signifies the good of the interior man, and a ‘fig-tree’ the good of the exterior man, therefore a ‘fig-tree’ is often mentioned in the Word at the same time as a ‘vine;’ as in the following passages..." *Joel 2:22* is cited along with *Joel 1:6, 7, and 12*.

AR 496

- "...by ‘rain,’ the truth of the church thence is signified...That ‘rain’ signifies the Divine truth from heaven, appears from these passages..." *Joel 2:23* is cited as an example.

AC 3580 [7]

- The passage refers to *Joel 2:23-24* and to *Joel 3:18*, " where the Lord’s kingdom is treated of; and by ‘sweet wine,’ by ‘milk,’ and by ‘waters,’ are signified spiritual things whose abundance is thus described."

AC 6537 [2]

- "That a 'threshing-floor' signifies where are the good of truth and the truth of good, thus where are the things of the church, is evident in Joel...2:23, 24... where the 'sons of Zion' denote truths from good; the 'threshing-floors full of grain,' the abundance of truths and goods."

AR 651

- "A winepress is also spoken of the goods of charity, from which truths of faith proceed, in Joel...2:23, 24."

AE 375 [29]

- "In Joel...2:23, 24...'new wine and oil' signify the truth and good of the church, for 'sons of Zion,' to whom these things are said, signify those who are of the church; 'the former rain in righteousness' signifies Divine truth flowing into good, from which is there conjunction, fructification, and multiplication; and 'floors full of pure grain' signify fullness." Note this number also cites *Joel 1:10*, where we read about the devastation of the ground, the corn, and the new wine, and how the fresh oil languishes.

AE 644 [15]

- "In Joel...2:23, 24...'The sons of Zion' signify those who are in genuine truths through which they have the good of love, for 'Zion' signifies the celestial church which is in the good of love to the Lord through genuine truths. That the Lord with such flows in with the good of love, and from that good into truths, is signified by 'He shall give them the former rain in righteousness;' 'righteousness' is predicated in the Word of the good of love, and 'the righteous' mean those who are in that good...That the Lord continually flows into truths with the good of love is signified by 'He shall cause to come down the former rain and the latter rain, in the first month;' that from this they have the good of love towards a brother and companion is signified by 'their floors are full of pure grain;' and that from this they have the truth and the good of love to the Lord is signified by 'the vats overflow with new wine and oil.' Those who are of the Lord's celestial church have the good of love towards a brother and companion; and this love, with those who are of the Lord's spiritual church, is called charity towards the neighbor."

AE 922 [6]

- "That 'wine-press' and 'treading it' signify the bringing forth of truth from good, because 'the grape' signifies spiritual good, and 'wine from the grape' truth from that good, can be seen from...Joel 2:23, 24...'Sons of Zion' signify

those who are in wisdom from the Divine truth; 'the floors are full of corn' signifies that they have celestial good in abundance; 'the wine-presses overflow with new wine and oil' signifies that from the good of charity they have truth and its delight."

AE 922 [8]

- "In most passages, where 'vintage' and 'wine-press' are mentioned, the 'harvest' and the 'corn-floor' are also mentioned (as in...Joel 2:23, 24; Joel 3:13...)...'corn' and 'bread' signify the good of celestial love, which is love to the Lord; and 'vintage' and 'wine-press,' from the 'grape' and 'wine,' signify the good of spiritual love, which is love towards the neighbor; for these two loves make one, like an efficient cause and its effect."

AC 9780 [4]

- "...'the oil' denotes the good of love and charity, and 'the wine,' the good and truth of faith." *Joel 2:24* is cited as an example.

AC 7643 [7]

- "...'locust' denotes falsity in the extremes vastating truths and goods." *Joel 1:4-7* and *Joel 2:24-25* are cited.

AC 9331 [5]

- This number cites *Joel 1:4-5* and *Joel 2:24-25*. The explanation however shows the signification of the perversion of the truth and good of the church by the locust. Our text emphasizes the Lord's compensation for the earlier destruction of the locust.

AE 543 [9]

- In *Joel 2:24-25*, "...'wine' and 'new wine' signify the truth of the church; likewise because it is said that 'the floors shall be full of grain, and the presses shall overflow with new wine and oil,' the 'floor' signifying the doctrine of the church, 'grain' and 'oil' its goods, and 'new wine' its truths."

AR 424

- This passage cites *Joel 1:4* and *Joel 2:25*. The expositional portion gives the negative representation of the locust and not the compensation meaning.

AR 447

- "...by 'the locust' and the rest falsity in outermost things is signified..."

AE 573 [15]

- "In Joel...2:25...An 'army' signifies falsities and evils of every kind...since these noxious little animals, 'the locust, the canker-worm, the caterpillar, and the palmer-worm,' signify falsities and evils that devastate or consume the truths and goods of the church...'locust and caterpillar' signify the falsities [and evils] of the sensual man."

Derived Doctrine

With twenty-seven references covering *Joel 2:21-25*, it seems we have enough exposition to go to the Putting It All Together section. Every major point seems to have been addressed.

Putting It All Together

We need to focus on the theme of restoration and compensation. Why? In *Joel 1:4*, the four kinds of locust stripped the land of its vegetation. The land, the grain, the vine, the fig-tree, the new wine, and the oil dried up. Never in the lifetime of those witnessing these things had they seen anything like it. Joy and gladness left the people with the shriveling seeds, the stripped branches, the dried-up clods of grass, the broken barns, and the cattle groaning. All of these things represented the demise of the vastated church. Those who had ignored and twisted the Word were being replaced by the Lord. The church needed to be vivified by the Lord.

Those who in their hearts loved the good of truth and the truth of good would be brought to the forefront of the Lord's new church. Don't let these terms slip by you. **Good of truth** and **truth of good** are terms the Writings use to show how a person approaches the Word with charity and uses for the Lord and the neighbor.

Let's look first at **good of truth**. In place of **good**, put the word **love**. In place of **truth**, put the word **wisdom**. Now we have **the love of wisdom**. The emphasis of this approach is to let love lead to wisdom. Now let's do the same thing with **truth of good**. For **truth**, use the word **wisdom**. For **good**, once again use **love**. Now we have **the wisdom of love**.

The good of truth (love of wisdom) is the approach of the celestial angels. The truth of good (wisdom of love) is the approach of the spiritual angels. The two approaches are mutually inclusive. They work toward a wholesome conjunction with the Lord through the study of His Word. The love of wisdom has an intuitive aspect to it. It's a love that knows the truth instantly when the truth from the Word is read. The

wisdom of love is a more rational approach where the understanding seeks to be enlightened by a love for the Lord and His Word.

Why do we need to know these things? Because the Lord, in these verses, announces that He will restore the church, the grass, the fig-tree, the new wine, and oil through these two angelic approaches. Please read again *AE 644 [15]* to see that this is so.

The Lord needs both—good of truth and truth of good—for the building up of the new church. Never allow the hells to engage you in an argument as to which of these is better. We are not to choose one over the other. It is not an either/or question. The church grows when both thrive for the Lord and His church. Fear not; do not be afraid; rejoice; He will restore the years of the consuming locust. Compensation comes from the Lord. Our job is to sing in our hearts the words, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do and hear."

Read and Reflect

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 2:21-25*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Did you read all twenty-seven references in preparation for understanding the spiritual sense?
2. How well can you distinguish the good of truth and the truth of good? If you are still unsure about these terms, read *Doctrine of Life 32*.
3. Have you listened to or participated in a debate regarding the importance of love and wisdom? Some feel love is primary. Others feel truth is primary. Doesn't hell just love to get us arguing about such things to divide us?
4. Think about restoration and compensation with the former rain and latter rain restoring life to the plants, animals and mankind. What does this mean? We are taught that the former rain signifies the Lord flowing in with the good of love, and from that good into truths—the former rain is righteousness. What then is the latter rain? Could the latter rain be the tranquility of peace when the Lord made His advent and defeated the hells? Could the latter rain be that sense of calm when combat ceases with the Lord winning out over hell?
5. Are you still basking in the light of this prophecy about the strength and power of the New Church?

6. The words "do not fear"; "do not be afraid"; "rejoice"; and "restoration" are words of comfort and encouragement. Can we somehow tell people in the church about this message of *Joel*?

JOEL 2:26-27

"You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, who has dealt wondrously with you; and My people shall never be put to shame. Then you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel: I am the Lord your God and there is no other. My people shall never be put to shame."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- We must preface this quote with what was started in verses 21-25: "They will have trust in the Lord, from which they will have goods and felicities..." The portion for the present verses is "...and acknowledgment from the heart."

AR 809

- "...[that] 'to praise God' signifies to worship Him, and hence that the praise of Him is the worship of Him, is evident from many passages in the Word, a few only of which are adduced..." *Joel 2:26* is cited.

Derived Doctrine

"You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied..."

- "Eat" signifies to communicate, to be conjoined, and to appropriate (*AC 2343*).
- In "plenty," or in "abundance," signifies the external knowledges to which good from the celestial level of the spiritual person can be applied, during states when truths and goods are multiplied. See *AC 5192* and *5292*. These numbers explain the meaning of the seven years of abundance in Egypt.
- "Satisfied" signifies that all spiritual nourishment is from the Lord and that as much is given as one wills (*AC 8410*).

"...and praise the name of the Lord your God."

- "Praise" signifies internal worship (*AC 1171 [3]*). "Praise" comes when there is a love of truth (*AC 3880 [5]*). "Praise" is given by the Lord through innocence (*AC 5236 [4]*).

- The "name of the Lord" is the sum of all by which the Lord is worshiped, consequently His name is the essence of everything of love and faith (AC 2724).
- "...the Lord your God..." When both "God" and "the Lord" are named, divine good and divine truth are signified. For where Divine Good is meant, the names "Lord" and "Jehovah" are used, and where Divine Truth is meant, the name God is used. See AE 689.

"Who has dealt wondrously with you..."

- No correspondences come to mind with these words. What could be of value is to recall all of the miracles the Lord provided in the wilderness experience and the miracles of the Lord in the New Testament. These things He wondrously gave the children of Israel, and the effects of them live on to eternity.

"...and My people shall never be put to shame."

- "People" in the spiritual sense represent the church, the good and truth of the Lord's Word (AC 1259-60 and AC 5342). In other words, the Lord's "family" of good and truth will not be put to shame.
- "Shame" signifies the presence of unclean loves (AR 706). This number goes on to encourage us to learn the truths of the Lord and to retain them.

"Then you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel..."

- The "midst," or middle, signifies what is inmost and primary, the best and purest things. The "midst" is perfection and purity. See AC 9666.
- "Israel" in the supreme sense is the Lord in relation to the internal of the church (AE 768 [15] and AC 4570).

"I am the Lord your God and there is no other. My people shall never be put to shame."

- Can we not, on our own, draw all of the above points together in this verse to get the meaning?
- The Lord is the center of the church. He is our purity and highest perfection. His miraculous deeds are infinite. The hells will never be able to use their falsity to tarnish His Love and Wisdom. His people, His Church, **will never** be put to shame.

Putting It All Together

Do we really need to pull this section together? The message is so simple and straightforward. The days of hell polluting the church are over. The days of hell making the church feel ashamed are over. We need to repeat this phrase again and

again. IT IS OVER. IT IS OVER. The Lord's New Church will reign for ever and ever. "They will have trust in the Lord, from which they will have goods and felicities and acknowledgment from the heart." (P&P)

Read and Reflect

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 2:26-27*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Can we, the next time the hells try to embarrass us, pull this lesson into the "midst" of our thinking? Can we say the words, "His People, His Church **will never** be put to shame"?
2. These words will put the hells to flight. Hell can't stand to be in the presence of the Lord's sphere. His wondrous miracles exist in our lives. Do we ever allow ourselves enough time to think about the miracles in our lives and then thank the Lord for them? Or do we slip into feeling sorry for ourselves?
3. The miracles of life are manifold. Each miracle is personal. They spill out in many ways and places. We touch the lives of others in ways we have no idea about unless someone tells us.
4. Do you think a church banner ought to be created with this message as its contribution to church events such as Charter Day or New Church Day?

JOEL 2:28-29

"And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "By His Divine the Lord will fill those who are of that church, with all things, and vivify them."

AC 574

- "That 'flesh' signifies that man had become corporeal appears from the signification of 'flesh' in the Word, where it is used to signify both every man in general, and also, specifically, the corporeal man. It is used to signify every man, in Joel...2:28..."

AC 2534 [3]

- "...it is manifest that to 'prophesy' is to teach." *Joel 2:28* is cited as an example.

AR 8

- "In Joel...2:28...This is concerning the church which was to be established by the Lord, in which they would not prophesy, but receive doctrine, which is to 'prophesy:'"

AE 624 [8]

- "In Joel...2:28...This is said of the Lord's coming, and of the perception of Divine truth by those who receive the Lord and believe in Him; the 'spirit' that will be poured out upon all flesh signifies the Divine truth proceeding from the Lord, for this is meant in the Word by the Holy Spirit; 'to prophesy' signifies to understand and teach the truths of doctrine; 'to dream dreams' signifies to receive revelation; and 'to see visions' signifies to perceive revelation; 'sons and daughters' signify those who are in the spiritual affection of truth and good; 'old men' signify those who are in wisdom, and 'young men,' those who are in intelligence."

AC 2567 [5]

- "In Joel...2:28, 29...where the Lord's kingdom is treated of; 'to prophesy' denotes to teach (n. 2534); 'sons,' truths themselves (n. 489-491); 'servants' and 'maidservants,' lower truths and goods, upon which the spirit is said to be poured out when they accede and confirm. That such things are signified by 'menservants and maidservants' here and elsewhere does not appear, by reason both of the common idea respecting menservants and maidservants, and of the apparent history."

AC 4682 [2]

- "...in Joel...2:28, 29...where 'pouring out the spirit upon them' denotes to instruct concerning truths, and 'prophesying' denotes to teach and preach them, and the same is signified by 'dreaming dreams.' 'Old men' are the wise, 'young men' the intelligent, 'servants' those who know."

AC 9818 [20]

- *Joel 2:28-29* is cited with other passages, about with the following is said: "That in these passages 'the Spirit of Jehovah' denotes the Divine truth, and through this the life of faith and of love, is evident; that it flows in immediately from the Lord and also mediately from Him through spirits and angels..."

Doctrine of the Lord 49

- "That by 'spirit' is meant the life of one who is regenerate, which is called spiritual life..." *Joel 2:28-29* is but one of many passages cited.

AE 183 [12]

- "That the 'Spirit of God' is Divine truth, and thence spiritual life to the man who receives it, is further evident from these passages." *Joel 2:28* is cited.

AR 704 [2]

- "That 'the great day of God Almighty' signifies the coming of the Lord, and then the New Church, is evident from many passages in the Word..." *Joel 2:29* is cited.

Derived Doctrine

"...it shall come to pass afterward..."

- "Pass" signifies what relates to the will and understanding (*AC 683*). To "pass through" signifies to know and to perceive the quality (*AC 3992*).
- The word "afterward" is not a past-tense correspondence. *AC 5216* gives us a clue about the possible meaning of "afterward". "...'after' denotes what is successive in time; in the spiritual world, and consequently in the spiritual sense, there is no notion of time, but instead of it the kind of state that corresponds."

Putting It All Together

"By His Divine the Lord will fill those who are of that church, with all things, and vivify them" (P&P)

The Lord's spirit, His Holy Spirit, will be poured out on all. He will help all to understand and teach the truths of doctrine; He will open the way to **receive** revelation and to **perceive** doctrine. He will increase within the church the number of people who will have a spiritual affection for truth and good; wisdom and

intelligence will sparkle with a radiance of His love and wisdom; and we shall all be vivified—made alive like never before. A feeling of mental youth and agility will be ours because the Lord gives us truth both immediately and mediately. Gone will be the control of the corporeal selfishness crowding out spiritual priorities. He promises vivification of mind and soul to the church.

"And all the people shall answer and say, 'Amen!'" (*Deuteronomy 27:15*)

"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever." (*Psalms 45:2*)

"Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only does wondrous things! And blessed be His glorious name forever! And let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen." (*Psalms 72:18-20*)

Read and Reflect

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 2:28-29*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. What reaction did you have when you read the passages of our lesson? Do you recall hearing these verses being read in a church service? Do you remember what feelings you had about their message?
2. There is a calm sphere with these words. There is a sense of peace and an assurance that all is right with us because the Lord is in charge. Does any resistance to this vision surface from the "corporeal" person?
3. Our positive theme carries on. Our encouragement to look for the spiritual New Church is in this prophecy. How can we pray for the Holy Spirit to be poured out on us? Should we be praying to receive revelation and the ability to perceive revelation?
4. In answer to these questions, I would hope we all will say—so may it be evermore—Amen.

JOEL 2:30-31

"And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Falsities of evil and evils of falsity will dissipate influx on the day of judgment."

AR 422

- "Every love in the spiritual world, when it is excited, appears at a distance as fire, within the hells as a glowing fire, and without, as the smoke of a fire, or as the smoke of a furnace. The falsities of the lusts springing from evil loves, are also described by 'smoke from fire'..." *Joel 2:30* is cited as an example.

AE 494

- "...'smoke'...signifies falsity from evil..." *Joel 2:30* is cited.

AE 539 [8]

- "In Joel...2:30...it is said of the Last Judgment; and 'blood, fire, and columns of smoke,' signify the truth of the Word falsified, its good adulterated, and mere falsities resulting therefrom, 'blood' meaning the truth of the Word falsified, 'fire' its good adulterated, and 'columns of smoke' mere dense falsities therefrom."

AC 1861 [3]

- "In Joel...2:30, 31...'fire' denotes hatred; 'pillars of smoke' falsities; 'the sun' charity; and 'the moon' faith."

AC 4735 [14]

- "Falsified and profaned truth is signified by the following passages concerning blood." *Joel 2:30* and *31* are cited.

AC 8819 [2]

- "(That 'smoke' denotes the obscurity of truth and also the thick darkness which is of falsity, is evident in...*Joel 2:30, 31*...)"

AC 9127 [5]

- "In these passages by 'blood' is not meant the blood of man's bodily life...but the blood of his spiritual life, which is truth Divine, to which violence has been done through falsity from evil." *Joel 2:30-31* is one of the passages cited.

HH 570

- "In these and in many other passages 'fire' means the lusts pertaining to love of self and love of the world, and the 'smoke' therefrom means falsity from evil." *Joel 2:30* and *31* are cited.

AE 329 [22]

- "In *Joel*...2:30, 31...the contrary meaning [of] 'blood' signifies violence offered to the Divine truth; for 'sun' in the Word signifies the celestial Divine, which is the Divine good, and 'moon' signifies the spiritual Divine, which is the Divine truth; it is therefore said that 'the moon shall be turned into blood.'"

AE 504 [34]

- "...the day of Jehovah,' which is the Last Judgment, is predicted in the Prophets...In *Joel*...2:30, 31..."

AC 2495 [3]

- "...by these words of the Lord there is signified that in the consummation of the age (or last period of the church) there will no longer be any love, or charity, nor therefore any faith. That this is the meaning is evident...in the Prophets, as in...*Joel 2:31*..."

HH 119

- "...in the Word the Lord in respect to love is likened to the sun, and in respect to faith to the moon; also that the 'sun' signifies love from the Lord to the Lord, and the 'moon' signifies faith from the Lord in the Lord, as in the following passages...*Joel 2:31*..."

AR 53

- "In these passages by 'sun' is not meant the sun of this world, but the sun of the angelic heaven, which is the Divine love and the Divine wisdom of the Lord; these are said to be 'obscured,' 'darkened,' 'covered,' and 'blackened' when there are evils and falsities with man. Hence it is evident, that similar

things are meant by the Lord's words, where He speaks of the consummation of the age, which is the last time of the church..." *Joel 2:31* is cited.

AR 332

- "It is said, 'the sun became black...' because adulterated good in itself is evil, and evil is black; and the reason why it is said 'the moon became as blood,' is because 'blood' signifies the Divine truth, and in the opposite sense, the Divine truth falsified...Nearly the same is said of the sun and moon in Joel... 2:31..."

AR 379

- "In these places, and many others, 'blood' signifies the truth of the Word falsified, and also profaned; which yet may be seen more manifestly still by reading those passages in the Word in their series...[by] 'blood' in the genuine sense, is signified the truth of the Word not falsified." *Joel 2:31* is cited.

AR 413

- "The reason that 'darkness' signifies this, is because light signifies truth; and when the light is extinguished, there comes darkness. In confirmation the passages will...be adduced, where similar things to those here in the Apocalypse are said of 'the sun, the moon, and the stars,' and of 'the darkness'..." *Joel 2:31* is cited.

AE 401 [14]

- "It is clear from what has been said above, that in these passages 'the sun and moon made black and darkened' means that there was no longer any good or any truth..." *Joel 2:31* is cited.

AE 526 [3]

- "In Joel...2:31..."The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood,' has a similar signification...namely, that at the end of the church there will be the falsity of evil in the place of the good of love, and evil of falsity in the place of truth of faith."

Canons, Chapter IV

- This chapter, which is too long to include here, deals with the meaning of the sun, moon, and stars.

Derived Doctrine

"And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth..."

- The word "wonders" is not given a doctrinal explanation. "Wonder" is. "Wonder" signifies that with the Lord all things are possible (*AC 2211*). "Wonder" signifies awe and admiration (*AC 1756 [3]*).
- "Heaven" signifies the spiritual and celestial things of the Lord's kingdom both in the heavens and on earth, in the church and every human being (*AC 2162 [8]*).

Putting It All Together

"Falsities of evil and evils of falsity will dissipate influx on the day of judgment." (*P&P*)

The meaning of the word "dissipate" is to scatter aimlessly, to break up, to squander, to waste away. With the day of the Lord coming to bring about the consummation of the dead church, hell musters together a massive covert plan to be covered or hidden in a huge black cloud of smoke called falsity and evil. Hell's goal is to interrupt, to destroy, and to scatter aimlessly any influx of the Lord from heaven. Will it work? Not if we look at the opening words of the Lord. "I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth." Even though hell frantically blows black and billowing smoke from its fiery, glowing ovens, the Lord will not be deterred. The blackness of their hearts is clear as day to Him. So the wonders of the heavens and the earth will be shown by the Lord. In the presence of the Lord, there will be signs of awe and admiration of His power. For with Him, all things are possible.

The hellish spirits will seek to turn the sun into darkness and the moon into blood. They want the "sun" of the Word to be falsified and its good adulterated. They want the "moon" of our faith falsified and violated so truth looks like evil and evil looks like truth.

But it will not work. Pass on the good news. The Lord will rid the church of evil and falsity and will establish His New Church.

Read and Reflect

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 2:30-31*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Let's talk about the purpose of smoke screens. The purpose of a smoke screen, militarily, is concealment and to permit stealth-like tactics. When the smoke is thick, the people on the other side of the smoke can't see or focus on the alignment or movement of their foe. There is an element of terrifying suspense involved. It's like a psychological torture. Our passage describes a hellish attempt at concealment to prevent the Lord's influx from coming to us. Do you get the sense of hell's plan?
2. Has hell ever given you a temporarily blackened sun? Have you had a time or incident that just shook your faith in the Lord? Did someone you trusted ever let you down, and did you feel like your world was collapsing?
3. Have you ever been taught a falsity as a truth or a truth as a falsity? What happened?
4. Hell wants us to give up on the Lord and the New Church. If we focus on persons in the church and not the principles of the church, we can have momentary "black-outs." Therefore, we need to create times to let the Lord show us the wonders of heaven and earth. What ways of seeing the Lord's power and awe work best for you? Is it a walk in the beauty of nature? Is it the presence of a child? Is it spending time with your best friend? Is it reading the Word? Is it listening to music? Is it writing a letter or poetry?
5. Please take a moment to reflect on how many times in this chapter the Lord says "I will." These positive words are full of assurance and a source of encouragement.

JOEL 2:32

"And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as the Lord has said, among the remnant whom the Lord calls."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "...but those who acknowledge and worship the Lord will be saved."

AC 5897 [5 & 6]

- "...man is continually among evils and falsities, and is held in captivity by them...Therefore unless the Lord were to gather up the goods and truths which as occasion offers are insinuated into a man during the progress of life, the man could not possibly be saved, for without remains there is salvation for none...From this...it is manifest that by 'remains' are meant...goods and truths...because these are what do no perversity, nor speak a lie, neither is a tongue of deceit found in their mouth." *Joel 2:32* is cited.

AC 5899

- "From these passages it is plain what it is 'to escape,' namely, that they who 'escape' are they who have remains, and that 'to escape' is to be delivered from damnation." *Joel 2:32* is cited.

AC 7051 [2]

- "Hence...it is that most persons in the Christian world...believe that that nation will again be chosen, and will then be brought back into the land of Canaan and this according to the sense of the letter, as in many passages...*Joel 2:32*..."

AE 433 [27]

- "From this it can be seen how far from the truth those have wandered, who believe that at the end of time the Jews will be converted to the Lord and brought back into the land of Canaan...In these passages those also are meant who were to be brought into the church, and thence into heaven from the earth after the Lord came, not only where the Christian religion is received but everywhere else..." *Joel 2:32* is cited as an example of how people have wandered from the truth.

Derived Doctrine

"And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

- "Pass" signifies to flow in or to receive influx, and "pass" relates to the will and understanding (*AC 683*). May we then conclude from this promise, from the Lord, that He would pour out the influx of His spirit and power to the faithful remnant? Is it a promise that their will and understanding would be strengthened with the resolve of the Lord's truth?
- To "call on the name of the Lord" (Jehovah) signifies to worship from charity (*AC 1455*). Review for a moment what this means. Worship from charity is a worship that is based on love of the Lord and the neighbor. It is

free from the hidden agendas of self-interest. It is a service in which genuine love flows out from the heart of the internal person.

- "The name of the Lord" represents thinking of the essence or qualities of the Lord. "Calling on the name of the Lord" signifies thinking about the sum of all by which the Lord is to be worshiped, that is, to count all of the blessings we receive from His love and wisdom (*AC 2724*).
- To be "saved" means to be rescued, or delivered, from the effects of the damnation brought on by self-love. The "remains" stored up in every one of us by the Lord are the means by which the Lord effects the rescue. Please read *AC 5897 [5 & 6]* again. It is cited above in the Passages from the Writings. It is one of those passages that is well worth reading often.

"For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance..."

- "Zion" signifies the advent of the Lord, and the establishment of the church by Him among those who are in the good of love (*AE 433 [8]*). *AR 612* teaches that Zion signifies heaven and the church where the Lord alone is worshipped.
- "Jerusalem" signifies "the church as to worship, and therefore also the church as to doctrine, for worship is prescribed in doctrine, and performed according to it..." (*AR 880*)
- "Deliverance" and "remains" are synonymous. The Lord, and the Lord alone, knows where our remains are and which of them should be called forth at the precise moment of need. Trusting the Lord, following His providential leading, brings about our deliverance. *AC 5897 [5 & 6]* and *AC 5899* are important passages about the power of remains and the message of deliverance. How can this be said with conviction? Look at the closing sentence of this chapter.

"...as the Lord has said, among the remnant whom the Lord calls."

- Doesn't this sum up well what we have just studied above regarding remains?
- The words "deliverance" and "escape" are used in our lesson about redemption. In some ways, I like the use of both words. "Deliverance" gives me a picture of the Lord taking our hand, and "escape" gives me a picture of Him leading those who call on His name to come out of the war zone to a safe place. What an escape plan that is! He leads us past sneak attacks. He helps us avoid traps laid out for us. Yes, "escape" seems like a powerful image to hold on to when we think of our deliverance.

Putting It All Together

P&P says "...those who acknowledge and worship the Lord will be saved."

This quote along with all of the quotes from the Writings shed great light on the meaning of the prophecy of Joel. What are the points of Chapter 2?

1. The Lord would come to visit the fallen church. How did the church fall? Its people allowed the holy things of the church to fall into a natural mode of thinking and living. The thinking of the natural world set the standards by which decisions were made. Eternal ends were not being sought by those in the church.
2. Therefore, falsity and evils were dispersing the knowledges of the Lord within the church. The church was dying. People were in danger of losing the light of heaven. So the Lord lovingly fought with the church.
3. The Lord exhorted the church to repent, to be converted, and to choose wisdom. He called for them to value His good and truth so as to remove the falsities of hell.
4. The Lord called on them to trust Him. He called on them to acknowledge Him from their hearts.
5. The Lord promised to vivify and fill the church with His presence and His ways.
6. Such an endeavor would not come easily. Hell would seek to dissipate any influx from heaven. Hell would lay down a huge amount of black and choking smoke from the ovens of self-love. Hell would seek to prevent the sun of heaven from shining on the church. The reflected light of the moon would be filled with blood so that its light would be lost, too.
7. But then the promises of the Lord and the call for deliverance cut through the efforts of hell. The Lord, in His positive and calm manner, announced that He would win out over hell and the dead church. A new church would rise up out of the death and despair of the present church.
8. He revealed His way of deliverance. The escape plan was laid out. Who will find these things? The remnant. Deliverance will come in the gifts of remains within those who are willing to be lead from Mount Zion and Jerusalem.

The Lord—the great "I will"—shall prevail against the morose and perverse plans of hell. His Hand is held out to "those who acknowledge and worship" Him. They shall be saved.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 2:32*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. I'd like to share something of the inspiration I got from reading about remains. Remains do no perversity. Remains speak not a lie. Nor is there a tongue of deceit found in their mouth. Remains give us deliverance. Remains provide us with the means to escape from the clutches of hell. Now for a two-part question: Have you given remains much doctrinal thought? Now that we have read these things about remains, are they more important to you than at any time before this lesson?
2. What has been your feeling about Israel being a favored nation in the eyes of the Lord? Does it make sense to you why many people, Christians as well, have believed this? We know the literal sense has many passages that seem to support the "favored nation" concept, but in light of what the Writings say, can we correct this idea in our minds?
3. Hell's black smoke screen to prevent the Lord's influx is quite graphic in the Word. How about in your life experiences? The moon filling with blood is another example. The moon represents faith. The moon has no light of its own. It reflects the light of the sun. So what do you think is the meaning of these examples of spiritual phenomena?
4. I am struck with the ending repetition of the prophet's messages. They all deal with the death of the church—be it the Jewish Church or the Christian Church. They announce the advent of the Lord and the birth of the New Church. But why do we need to hear this theme so many times? Granted, each story focuses on a different element of the death of the Church. Is the message repeated because we have failed to receive it? Or is this theme prevalent to ensure that, no matter what prophet we read, we will hear this story at least once?
5. Looking ahead to the third chapter, what message would you anticipate reading? Will we read about the gathering up of the remnant? Will we study more about the struggle ahead of the new church? Will we read about the eventual triumph of the Lord over the hells?
6. Will the Word recapture the hearts and minds of the faithful?

Chapter Three

JOEL 3:1-3

"For behold, in those days and at that time, when I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat; and I will enter into judgment with them there on account of My people, My heritage Israel, whom they scattered among the nations; they have also divided up My land. They have cast lots for My people, have given a boy as payment for a harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they may drink."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Then the church will be gathered together, and then judgment will be executed upon those who have scattered the goods and truths of the church..."

Doctrine of the Lord 4

- "...I shall in this first chapter merely adduce passages from the Word which contain the expressions 'that day,' 'in that day,' and 'in that time;' in which, by 'day,' and 'time,' is meant the Lord's advent. In...Joel...3:1, 2, 14, 18)."

AR 704

- "...the Lord's coming and the New Church from Him...are meant by 'the day of Jehovah'; as in these...Joel 3:1, 14, 18..."

TCR 82 [2]

- "...the Lord's coming is called 'the day of Jehovah' (as in...Joel 3:1, 14, 18...)..."

AC 5236 [5]

- "In the following passages...by a 'boy' or 'child' is signified innocence." *Joel 3:3* is cited.

AE 376 [24]

- "In Joel...3:3...'To cast lots upon the people' signifies to dissipate the truths of the church, 'to cast a lot' signifying to dissipate, and 'people' signifying the

church in relation to truths, thus also the truths of the church; 'to give a boy for a harlot' signifies to falsify truth, 'boy' meaning the truth of the church, and 'harlot' falsity; and 'to sell a girl for wine, which they drank,' signifies to pervert the good of the church by truth falsified, 'girl' meaning the good of the church, and 'wine' truth falsified."

AE 863 [10]

- "In Joel...3:3...'To cast lots upon the people' signifies to disperse the truths of the church by falsities; 'to give a boy for a harlot' signifies to falsify the truths of the Word; 'to sell a girl for wine' signifies to falsify the goods of the Word; 'which they drank' signifies becoming imbued with falsity."

Derived Doctrine

"When I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem..."

- "Bring back" signifies that the internal person will reduce everything in the external to a state of agreement (*AC 1717*).
- "Captives" signify a mind in darkness about good and truth (*AC 7950*).
- "Judah" signifies a celestial love to the Lord, with all who are to be of His new heaven and new church (*AR 350*).
- "Jerusalem" signifies those who will be in the church who will receive interiorly the Divine Proceeding (Holy Spirit) and will receive it exteriorly (*AE 629 [6]*).

"...gather all nations and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat..."

- To "gather" or to "store up" signifies the truths in the memory. *AC 679* teaches us that "...'gathering' is predicated of the things that are in man's memory, where they are gathered together."
- The "valley of Jehoshaphat" signifies the falsification of the Word (*AE 911 [8]*).
- To "gather all nations" signifies the evils of the will, or lusts, and nations (people) the persuasions of the falsities of the understanding (*AC 622*).
- Do we see what is being said here? In order for the Lord to bring back the captives, He must collect all of the truths in the memory of the people. The gathering of the nations is a collection of the evils in the will and understanding. He must expose how these corrupted vessels brought about the falsification of the Word. The Lord didn't do this in the mountain. It took place in the valley where battles occur, where the daily life was more impure and profane. See *AC 1292*.

"...I will enter into judgment with them there [in the valley of Jehoshaphat]..."

- The doctrine of good relates to Justice and the doctrine of truth to Judgment (*AC 612 and 2231*). To "enter into judgment with them" signifies that the Lord will bring His truth into the center of their falsification of the Word for the purpose of exposing and expelling the disorders of their evils.

"...on account of My people, My heritage Israel..."

- "Heritage" has a **good representation**. *AE 650 [53]* teaches that "heritage" signifies the church. *AE 727 [10]* describes "heritage" as signifying the church that has Divine truth, and its power against falsities. *AE 727 [6]* teaches that the "flock of heritage" signifies those in the church who are in spiritual things of the Word, which are the truths of its internal sense. "Heritage" in **the negative sense** is described as the "heritage of Esau" wherein the natural person's good is destroyed by the falsities of the sensuous person (*AE 714 [25]*). And lastly, *AE 730* gives us this: "'Esau's heritage' signifies the falsities from evils."
- "Israel" in the highest sense means the Lord in relation to the internal of the church and also the church with those who are interiorly natural and have truths there from a spiritual origin. "Israel" signifies the church that is spiritual-natural (*AE 768 [15]*).
- "People" signify truth or falsity, and "nation" signifies good or evil (*AC 1259-60*). Note this interesting quote from *AC 1259 [6]* and *1672*: "Before the sons of Israel sought for kings, they were a nation...but after they desired a king... they became a people."

"...whom they have scattered among the nations; they have also divided up My land."

- "Scattered" signifies to spread falsities from evil (*AE 67*). "Scattered" signifies an infernal enjoyment of mixing or mingling falsity with truths (*AC 10464-65*). "Scattering" signifies the dissemination of falsities by those who are not in truths (*TCR 137*).
- "Among the nations" signifies the enjoyment of scattering falsity in the will or good of the church. See *AC 1259* for the signification of "nation."
- "Divided" signifies the devastation of the church and its end, when there is a separation of its truths and goods (*AE 710 [24]*).
- "Land" signifies various things: the internal man of the church; the church itself; the doctrine of love and charity; where the faith of the church resides (*AC 2571*).

"They...have given a boy as payment for a harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they may drink."

- "Give" in the positive sense signifies that all things are the Lord's (AC 2026). The question jumps out at us—were they giving away that which was the Lord's?
- "Payment" or the act of buying means that they sought to make acquisitions for themselves. Truth that constitutes faith is never an acquisition that a person makes; it is a gift instilled and conferred by the Lord. See AC 5664. What did they want to buy?
- "Boy" signifies the truth and good of innocence (AE 863 [11]).
- "Harlot" signifies to falsify the truths of the Word (AE 863 [10]).
- "Sold," or "sell," signifies to claim for oneself (AC 3325). "Sell" signifies to remove something from oneself (AC 4752). "Sell" signifies to ascribe something to someone else (AC 5371). "Sell" signifies those who make personal gain from holy things (AE 840 [4]). In the positive sense, "sell" signifies to set aside all self-love to procure the divine truth in the Word (AC 840 [9 & 10]).
- "Girl" signifies goods and their affections and the derivative gladness (AC 2348).
- "Wine" in the positive sense signifies faith from charity. To "drink wine" signifies a wish to investigate what belongs to faith (AC 1071). The "wine of whoredom" signifies adulterated truths of faith (AC 1072 [4]).
- To "drink" signifies to inquire whether any truth could be conjoined or appropriated (AC 3089). "Drink" signifies instruction in spiritual things (AC 2704). We can, from the context of this verse, see that "they" did not want to investigate the Lord's truth. Instead, they wanted to investigate ways to falsify and pollute the Word.

Putting It All Together

"Then the church will be gathered together, and then judgment will be executed upon those who have scattered the goods and truths of the church." (P&P)

Can we picture the great spiritual gathering of the church? I don't necessarily picture throngs of people as much as I picture the Lord "reviewing" the doctrines, the policies, the attitudes that misled the church over the years. It's not as if the Lord wasn't aware of these things up to this point. That's not His nature. All along the way, He was intricately involved. Each step of the way, He tried to mediate things. He tried to lift the church. If someone wanted to choose a disorder, He worked to get that person to choose a lesser disorder. The life of humanity was in great peril. In effect, the church and its people had run out of spiritual options. The "time" left to them was at its end. The Lord needed to act on behalf of the church. *Doctrine of the Lord 3* outlines the seriousness of the situation for us:

"The Lord came into the world **in the fullness of times**, which was when He was no longer known by the Jews, and **unless He had then come into the world and revealed Himself, mankind would have perished in eternal death.**"

How does this quote fit into our lesson from *Joel*?

1. The spiritual barrenness of the church was "gathered together" so it could be made plain to the church what gross evils they had come to live and love.
2. Their actions, their choices were reviewed in the valley of Jehoshaphat, a valley of decisions where a "war" was going to take place. The outcome would not be in doubt. The Lord was going to make a judgment on the folly of their thinking. He was going to end the reign of evil and falsity, and give birth to a new church.
3. What issues would come under the scrutiny and light of the Lord? The falsities of the sensual person had destroyed natural good. The scattering of the people spoke of the infernal enjoyment the hells derived from mixing and mingling falsities with truths. The clever subterfuges used to mislead the church would be exposed. The mocking laughter and glee of the hellish spirits would end.
4. Hellish loves worked tirelessly to divide the will and understanding. There was devastation in the land. Lots were cast. We are taught that casting lots signifies the plan of hell to dissipate the truths of the Word. The hells propounded the idea that they could "buy" their way into heaven or anywhere else they wanted to go. This was illustrated with the buying and selling of the young boy and girl. The philosophy of "payment" was wrong. The things they tried to claim for themselves were not theirs to buy or own. The Lord owned them. It was His choosing to do with them what He wanted. The Lord conferred divine things freely on the faithful. The faithful needed no money. The hells could not sell the holy things of the Lord for their own profit. It was now time for the Lord to completely expose the layers of falsity and evil within the fallen church.
5. Humankind, the church, had spiritually and morally bottomed out. The Lord's love and mercy needed to come into the world to provide a way out of the pit of hell. If the Lord had delayed His coming any longer, it would have been all over, spiritually, for the church.

Read and Reflect

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 3:1-3*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. The word "Jehoshaphat" in Hebrew comprises various meanings. It means "Yahu **judges** or **has judged**." It also is identified with the term **decision**. But when considered in a larger context, it is speaking of a **verdict** being made by the Lord. Would you agree that the choice of the valley of Jehoshaphat in the prophecy was not a random choice? How is it relevant to the situation?
2. The story of the tower of Babel comes to mind when I read about the buying and selling theme in *Joel*. The builders of that tower felt they could force their way into heaven and become god-like. Do you see some of this outlook when you think about the hells' brazen attitude about purchasing whatever they wanted?
3. Our lesson portrays hell's glee and delight in mixing and mingling falsity with truth. As always, we need to think of some example of this in our day. What examples come to mind?
4. One of the quotes in our Derived Doctrine section mentioned that before Israel had sought a king, they were a "nation." After they took on a king, they were called a "people." What do you make of this point? Doesn't this sound like a loss of cohesion moving from nation to people? The unity of the nation was lost when "Everyone did what was right in his own eyes." (*Judges 17:6*)
5. The giving and selling of the boy and girl signifies the cheapening of the good of innocence and the conjugal quality. What application of this principle can we make in today's issues of life?
6. Does the quote from *Doctrine of the Lord 3* awaken your mind to the desperate conditions of the world before the advent of the Lord? Have conditions improved since the advent? How? Does the fact that we have the Writings improve our opportunities to combat the forces of hell?

JOEL 3:4-8

"Indeed, what have you to do with Me, O Tyre and Sidon, and all the coasts of Philistia? Will you retaliate against Me? But if you retaliate against Me, swiftly and speedily I will return your retaliation upon your own head; because you have taken My silver and My gold, and have carried into your temples My prized possessions. Also the people of Judah and the people of Jerusalem you have sold to the Greeks, that you may remove them far from their borders. Behold, I will raise them out of the place to which you have sold them, and will return your retaliation upon your own head. I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the people of Judah, and they will sell them to the Sabeans, to a people far off; for the Lord has spoken."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "...upon those who are in knowledges (cognitions) alone and in faith alone, and have thereby destroyed the truths of the Word and of doctrine."

AC 1201 [2]

- "In Joel...3:4, 5...Here "Tyre and Zidon" evidently denote knowledges, and are called 'the borders of Philistia;' 'silver and gold,' and 'desirable good things,' are knowledges."

AC 9340 [8]

- "In Joel...3:4, 5...'all borders of Philistia' denote all the interior and exterior truths of faith; 'to carry silver and gold and desirable good things into their temples' denotes to pervert truths and goods, and profane them by application to evils and falsities. (That 'silver and gold' denote truths and goods, see n. 1551, 2954, 5658, 6112, 6914, 6917, 8932.)"

AC 1197 [4]

- "In Joel...3:4-6...Here it is evident what is meant by the Philistines, and by 'all Philistia,' or all 'the borders' of it. 'Silver and gold' here are the spiritual and celestial things of faith; 'desirable good things' are the knowledges of them. That they 'carried them into their temples,' is that they possessed and proclaimed them; and that they 'sold the sons of Judah and the sons of Jerusalem,' signifies that they had no love and no faith; 'Judah' in the Word is the celestial of faith, and 'Jerusalem' is the spiritual of faith thence derived, which were 'removed far from their borders.'"

AC 10011 [3]

- "That by the 'head' is meant the whole man, is also evident from many passages in the Word, as the following...Joel 3:4, 7..."

AE 577 [12]

- "But in the contrary sense the 'head' signifies the craftiness that those have who are in the love of ruling...That the craftiness by which they purpose and contrive evil against others returns upon themselves is by..." *Joel 3:4* and *7* are cited.

AC 1551 [4]

- "In Joel...3:5...This is said concerning Tyre, Zidon, and Philistia; by which are signified knowledges, which are 'the gold and the silver' that they carried into their temples."

AR 913

- "The reason why 'gold' signifies the good of love is because metals, as well as each and every thing which appears in the natural world, correspond: gold to the good of love, silver to the truths of wisdom...That 'gold' from correspondence signifies the good of love, may appear from the following passages..." *Joel 3:5* is cited.

AC 1151 [6]

- "...in Joel...3:6...'The sons of Judah' denote celestial things of faith; 'the sons of Jerusalem,' spiritual things of faith—thus things internal; and 'the sons of the Javanites,' worship in externals separate from what is internal. Because this worship is so widely remote from what is internal, it is said that they have 'removed them far from their border.'"

AE 840 [11]

- "Moreover, 'to sell' and 'to be sold' signify to alienate truths and to be alienated from them, and to accept falsities in their place, and to be captivated by them." *Joel 3:6* and *7* are cited.

AC 5886 [3]

- "In Joel...3:6-8...Speaking of Tyre and Sidon; 'to sell' here also denotes to alienate."

AE 119 [4]

- "He who knows that by 'Judah' is meant in the highest sense the Lord, and in the internal sense His kingdom and the Word, and in the external sense doctrine from the Word, also in a contrary sense those who deny the Lord and adulterate the Word, can know what is signified by 'Judah' in very many passages of the Word, as in the following..." *Joel 3:6, 18, and 20* are cited.

Derived Doctrine

"Indeed, what have you to do with Me, O Tyre and Sidon, and all the coasts of Philistia?"

- Does the word "indeed" mean "in truth," "in fact," or is it an exclamation of surprise, irony, or incredulity?
- "Tyre" and "Sidon" (Zidon) represent those who perverted spiritual things. The Lord is making it quite clear that these two cities had no interest or part of Him in their hearts and minds. They were dangerous and arrogant neighbors of Israel.
- As we think about the meanings given above for "...and all the coasts of Philistia," it may be helpful to consider *Ezekiel 25:16*: "...therefore thus says the Lord God: 'I will stretch out My hand against the **Philistines**, and I will... destroy the remnant of the **seacoast**.'" *AE 275* explains the spiritual sense of this passage: **'the Philistines' signify those who are in the doctrine of faith alone**, and the remnant of the **seacoast signify all things of truth**."

"Will you retaliate against Me? But if you retaliate against Me, swiftly and speedily I will return your retaliation upon your own head..."

- There is a "law of order" in the spiritual world that is constant and perpetual. When an evil spirit intends harm to be inflicted on others, whether they are companions or enemies, the intended evil recoils upon the spirit who willed it to be done (*AC 8223*). The spirit of retaliation faces the constant and perpetual law of order. Can we see this law written within this passage? Those who want to retaliate against the Lord will experience swift and speedy retaliation upon their own head. The spirit of retaliation comes only from the evil and not from the good because the good continually desire to do good to both foes and friends.

"...because you have taken My silver and My gold, and have carried into your temples My prized possessions."

- To "take away" signifies to remove every good and truth of the church for the purpose of leaving no power to resist falsities (*AE 727 [12]*). According to *AC 10540*, to "take away" signifies to destroy defending truths.
- "My silver" relates to understanding truths of the Lord. "My gold" relates to willing the things of the Lord. Hence, this phrase describes a removal of the understanding and the will.
- What would be a "prized possession" of the Lord's? It most likely would be the conjugal principle within all things. What is that conjugal principle? *CL 316* teaches, "The conjugal principle is present in the tiniest details of each human being." *AC 3915* shares with us, "The conjunction of good and truth is the conjugal principle in the Lord's kingdom." So the crime here is that the

prized possession was carried into the temple of self-love so that it could be disjoined, severed, and lost.

"Also the people of Judah and the people of Jerusalem you have sold to the Greeks, that you may remove them far from their borders."

- "The people of Judah" signify love to the Lord, with whom the church was to be established (*AC 10329*). The people of Jerusalem signify the church with whom the Divine Proceeding (Holy Spirit) was to be received (*AE 629 [6]*).
- "Sold to the Greeks" signifies being among a nation of falsities (*AE 242 [12]*). "Selling" signifies the desire to have personal gain from holy things.
- Removing the people "far" from their borders is an effort to diminish the memory-knowledges of truths stored up from the Word. To carry people "far from their borders" is to trivialize the things of the Word learned from childhood. *AE 518 [17]* drew me to the possibility of applying this meaning to the passage.

Putting It All Together

P&P focuses our reflection on the heart of the problem in these verses. "... knowledges **alone** and faith **alone**" are what destroyed the truths of the Word and the doctrine drawn from the Word. Aloneness fosters separation of the will and understanding instead of a balanced conjunction. It dissolves the conjugal principle within what the Lord intended to be united.

Did the frequent use of the word "retaliation" come to your attention? In the passages we are considering, the word "retaliation" occurs three times. The dictionary defines retaliation as "To return like for like; to return evil for evil."

Why did the fallen church feel it had to retaliate? What led them to decide they must give the Lord "like for like" or "evil for evil"? The Lord does no evil. He only seeks to do good to all of His children. Could the anger they felt stem from their belief that the Lord hindered them from doing what they wanted to do? Was their anger a form of displaced hostility? When self-love is out of control, it favors no one except self. Anyone or anything that gets in the way of self-love is attacked. We know from many teachings in the Writings that hell burns to blot out the name of the Lord. They long to destroy the Lord and all those who love Him. Hell enjoys attacking good and truth.

The Lord introduces us to an important "law of order." He shows us the results of the spirit of retaliation. Those who wish harm on others will have a like harm return to them. Those who wish good to a friend or neighbor will have a like good return to them. The fallen church was in for a sad end. "Swiftly and speedily," their retaliation would "be upon [their] own head."

But we should not end on this retaliatory note. The Lord promises to restore and return His "prized possessions" to the temple. He will return those who were held captive by self-love and bring them into the presence of the gold and silver in the temple. The good of love (gold) and the good of truth (silver) will once again be the conjunctive means to restore a balanced worship of the Lord. The bleak **aloneness** will be removed. "Knowledge **alone** and faith **alone**" will no longer be present in the hearts and minds of His people. The conjugal principle will thrive in the church. The great gate of conjunction will be open wide, inviting all to enter into the warmth and protective fellowship of the Lord's new church.

Read and Reflect

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 3:4-8*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Can you recall a time when you wanted something strongly and no warning advice against getting it was allowed in the pursuit of your goal? What happened?
2. Did you feel antagonism toward the person speaking against your goal? Sometimes, our persistence is for something good. But think now of a time when you insisted on getting your own way and the situation ended sadly. Why do we sometimes fail to listen to the advice offered to us?
3. What about the "law of order" regarding retaliation? Do you see it being so? Did it worry you? What are the fruits of getting even with someone?
4. I hope we will be able to recall the positive aspect of the "law of order." Our good wishes for others also return to us.
5. Do you see the danger of "aloneness"? Separating the will and the understanding brings sad results. Hell wants to get us arguing about which is most important, Good (affections) or Truth (understanding). The Jacob and Esau story in the Word illustrates in many ways the strife between the will and understanding. What illustrations of this point can you think of?
6. Have you ever participated in a debate about the importance of "feelings" over the rational approach to problem-solving?
7. The gold and silver stolen away have quite a rich application to life. Please note the Writings say that these "prized possessions" of the church were taken away by "the craftiness" and purpose of those who "contrive evil

against others." We are taught that these crafty ones are those who are in the love of ruling. Any ideas of how we may see this application to our lives and times?

8. One last suggested question: Do we sense that there is a conjugal principle in all things created? If that principle is ignored, hated, or separated, do you see the ramifications of how the spiritual church within us dies and becomes antagonistic to the Lord? Aloneness is a cold and lifeless way of existing.

JOEL 3:9-12

"Proclaim this among the nations: 'Prepare for war! Wake up the mighty men, let all men of war draw near, let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, 'I am strong.' Assemble and come, all you nations, and gather together all around. Cause Your mighty ones to go down there, O Lord. Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Combat of good and truth against evils and falsities at that time."

AC 9857 [10]

- "...'doing judgments' denotes to judge either to death, which is damnation; or to life, which is salvation. Salvation or damnation is also signified by 'judgment,'...Where the office of a judge is treated of..." *Joel 3:12* is cited as an example.

AE 911 [8]

- "In Joel...3:12, 13...This chapter treats of the falsification of the truth in the Word, and the devastation of the church by it; and this verse treats of the last state of the church, when judgment takes place...That judgment then takes place is plainly declared, 'the valley of Jehoshaphat,' where judgment is executed, signifying the falsification of the Word."

Derived Doctrine

"Proclaim this among the nations: 'Prepare for war!'"

- *AC 10412* explains that to "proclaim" signifies that the true Divine is shown as the essential of the church, and it is to be announced that this Divine is to be perpetually worshipped. In *AE 302*, "proclaim" signifies that an exploration is to be made. The influx of the Lord will make known the states of life of everyone in heaven and on earth.
- "Nations" signifies the evils of the will, or lusts, whereas "people" signifies the falsities of the understanding, or persuasions (*AC 622*).
- "Prepare" signifies **making ready to receive truth** (*AC 3142 [2]*). "Prepare" signifies to make one **ready to live according to divine order** (*TCR 110 [5]*). To "make ready" signifies that **the church was to be conjoined with the Lord through the Word** (*AR 881*).
- "War" signifies spiritual fighting against the lusts of evil and the persuasions of falsity (*AC 1663, 1664*). "War" signifies the combats of the Lord with the hells (*AE 817 [7]*).

"Wake up the mighty men, let all men of war draw near, let them come up."

- "Wake" signifies a clear and alert state (*AC 5210*). "Wake" signifies a state in which people begin to know that they do not live from themselves. Thus, they "wake up." See *AC 147*.
- "Mighty men" or mighty warriors signify those who are strong in faith (*AC 1179*). "Mighty ones" signify those who love good (*AE 922 [2]*). In the opposite sense, "mighty men" signify those who live falsities because of self-love (*AC 8317*). Mighty warriors signify those consumed by self love (*AC 583*).
- To "draw near" signifies receiving influx to be conjoined to the Lord through love (*AC 8159*).

"Beat your ploughshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears..."

- To "beat" signifies the arrangement and disposal of truths in their order and series (*AC 10303 [2]*). To "beat" or hammer signifies to make good solid (*AC 9550*). The rain and wind beating on the house built on the rock signifies to form the person of the church so that he or she does not fall but conquers (*AE 411 [11]*).
- "Ploughshares" signify the goods of the church that cultivate truths (*AE 734 [3]*).
- In *AC 2799*, "swords" are described as signifying the truth of faith combating. A "sword" in the internal sense signifies the truth of faith combating and also the vastation of truth. In the opposite sense, a "sword" is falsity combating truth, and the punishment of falsity. *AE* contains at least eight passages stating that a "sword" signifies falsity destroying truth and good.

- "Pruning hooks" signify doctrinal truths and also signify perceptions and knowledges of truths (*AE 734 [2]*).
- "Spears" signify truths of use in spiritual warfare, which, with regeneration, become preparatory to the reception of truths from good (*AC 1664 [3]* and *AC 5895*).
- **Before passing on to other derived doctrine, please note that Isaiah 2:4 and Micah 4:3 reverse this command from the Lord.** These two passages command the Israelites to "beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks."

"Let the weak say, 'I am strong.'"

- "Weak" signifies being without supporting truths (*AC 6344*). "Weak" signifies that the affections of external truth have a feeble and wavering understanding (*AC 3820*).
- *AE 922 [5]* has an explanation about strength that seems to apply to the words "I am strong." "As all strength in the Word is in the letter, it is said (in Isaiah 63:1) 'walking in the multitude of His strength.'" In other words, we need to know and feel the strength of the Word and walk in the ways of truth, which "cannot be resisted" (*AC 426 [3]*).
- "Let" means to allow or permit. "Allow" signifies to have or obtain spiritual food regularly to become freed from sins (*AC 2165*).

"Assemble and come, all you nations, and gather together all around."

- *AC 6338* explains that "assemble" signifies to set goods and truths in order, for goods and truths cannot be assembled if they are not in order.
- "Come and see" signifies giving attention to and having a degree of perception (*AE 354*).
- "All you nations" possibly represents the gathering of those in the Lord's kingdom. See *AC 1416 [5]*. The indication here is that the natural, spiritual, and celestial of the Lord's kingdom have a divine calling to gather. There was to be a combined and unified mobilization of heavenly forces to oust the hells from the church.
- "Gather together all around." "Gather" signifies to excite the truths in the memory for combat (*AR 707*). All in the same goods and truths gather to meet and organize forces (*AC 6451*). Please note the call to gather "all around." The Divine circle. The total or complete protection for the day of the battle.

"Cause Your mighty ones to go down there, O Lord."

- The word "cause" seems to imply "make," "send," "direct," or "command." "Your mighty ones." There is another important word to focus on: "Your" mighty ones. This battle is being waged from the Lord's resources and not

humanity's. When the battle occurs and victory is secured, human prudence has no claim to the victory. The Lord's mighty ones assured the victory.

"Let the nations be awakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat..."

- "Awaken" signifies enlightenment. To be asleep signifies to be in an obscure state (AC 3715).
- "Come up" signifies to progress from what is external to what is internal (AC 5202).
- The "Valley of Jehoshaphat" signifies the falsification of the Word (AE 911 [8]). In other words, the Lord was directing His mighty ones to the source of all the spiritual problems. Listen now to the closing portion of this verse.

"For there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations."

- To "sit" signifies a state of thought (AC 2684).
- To "judge" denotes the Lord opening the doctrine of His truth (AC 2231). When He opens His truth, all veneers will melt away. All pretenses will be uncovered. True motives will be seen. Things misjudged or improperly learned will be straightened out. "The crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth; the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together." (Isaiah 40:4-5)
- "All surrounding nations" will see and witness the eradication of falsity. The Word will be restored to its Holy place in the hearts and mind of the church.

Putting It All Together

P&P summarizes these verses with an announcement from the Lord of a combat against evils and falsities. The literal sense of the Word boldly declares, "Prepare for war!" The internal sense declares what must be done to prepare for war:

- We must live according to divine order.
- The church must be conjoined with the Lord and the Word.
- We must be awake, be alert, and realize that we cannot live from ourselves alone.
- Ploughshares must be beaten into swords, meaning that good must be made solid and firm, and then it must put truths in order.
- The sword of faith must combat evil.
- Instead of calling our efforts weak, we need to trust the Lord and believe that with His guidance, "I am strong." The hells flee from us when they see that we believe this truth because the Lord told us to say it.

The day of the Lord's judgment is at hand. The pretense and false front of the hells will be exposed and removed by the Lord and His mighty ones. The Lord will sit in judgment in the valley of Jehoshaphat—the falsification of the Word—and He will

return the Word to His people and His New Church. All of the nations, all of the heavens, will sit and witness this magnificent restoration of good and truth. The crooked will be made straight, and the rough places will be made smooth. There will be a new highway built by the Lord, and He will guide His people to the eternal Promised Land through the process of regeneration.

So let us "Gather together all around." Let us share the exciting news from the Lord with confidence and feel the surge of power from heaven so we can say in unison: "**I am strong!**"

Read and Reflect

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 3:9-12*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Did you find this section spiritually invigorating? The Lord minced no words. There was going to be combat. There was going to be order and arrangement of resources. There was going to be a hardening up of good and truth. There was a call to be awake. What do you make of all these preparations by the Lord?
2. Did you feel like you wanted to be part of the winning army? Isn't it comforting to know that hell will not win despite its defense?
3. How may we practice the "I am strong!" speech to ourselves?
4. Why would the quotes from *Isaiah* and *Micah* about ploughshares and spears be different?

JOEL 3:13-15

"Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; for the winepress is full. The vats overflow—for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and moon will grow dark, and the stars will diminish their brightness."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Then evil is consummated."

AC 9295 [6]

- "In Joel...3:13...By 'the harvest' is signified the consummation of the age, or the last state of the devastated church."

AR 651

- "'A winepress' signifies exploration, because, in presses, must is pressed out from clusters..." *Joel 3:13* is cited.

AE 911 [8]

- "In Joel...3:12, 13...This chapter treats of the falsification of the truth in the Word, and the devastation of the church by it; and this verse treats of the last state of the church, when judgment takes place; and this state is described... by 'sending forth the sickle, for the harvest is ripe,' the 'harvest' being that last state; also by 'the wine-press is full and the vats overflow,'...That judgment then takes place is plainly declared, 'the valley of Jehoshaphat,' where judgment is executed, signifying the falsification of the Word."

AE 922 [3]

- "In Joel...3:13...The devastation of the church as to good and as to truth is thus described; and 'the wine-press is full and the vats have overflowed' signifies that there was nothing except falsities from evil."

AE 922 [8]

- "In most passages, where 'vintage' and 'winepress' are mentioned, the 'harvest' [signifies] the good of celestial love, which is love to the Lord; and...'wine-press,'...[signifies] the good of spiritual love, which is love towards the neighbor; for these two loves make one, like an efficient cause and its effect." *Joel 3:13* is cited as an example.

AC 2495 [2 & 3]

- "...the 'sun' does not mean the sun, nor the 'moon' the moon, nor the 'stars' the stars; but that the 'sun' signifies love to the Lord and charity toward the neighbor; the 'moon' the faith of love and charity; and the 'stars' the knowledges of good and truth...so that by these words of the Lord there is signified that in the consummation of the age (or last period of the church) there will no longer be any love, or charity, nor therefore any faith. That this is the meaning is evident from similar words of the Lord in the Prophets, as in...*Joel 3:14, 15*..."

AC 4697 [4 & 5]

- "...by the 'sun and moon' are signified love and charity, or good and truth, and by the 'stars' knowledges may be seen...And because the last day or the last state of the church is here treated of, by 'the sun being darkened and the moon not giving her light' is signified that then the good of love and of charity will perish; and by 'the stars falling from heaven,' that the knowledges of good and of truth will also perish. That these things are signified, is evident from the prophetic parts of the Word, in which similar things are said of the last state of the church, as in...Joel 3:14, 15..."

AR 53

- "...the Lord appears as a sun in heaven before the angels...'The sun'...also signifies love and wisdom from the Lord...Joel 3:14, 15...In these passages by 'sun' is not meant the sun of this world, but the sun of the angelic heaven, which is the Divine love and the Divine wisdom of the Lord; these are said to be 'obscured,' 'darkened,' 'covered,' and 'blackened' when there are evils and falsities with man. Hence it is evident, that similar things are meant by the Lord's words, where He speaks of the consummation of the age, which is the last time of the church..."

AE 401 [14]

- "It is clear...That in these passages 'the sun and moon made black and darkened' means that there was no longer any good or any truth..." *Joel 3:14-15* is cited.

AE 526 [4]

- "In Joel...3:14, 15...This is said of the last time of the church, when there is no longer any spiritual good or truth, or the good and truth of heaven and the church, but evil and falsity. That the goods and truths of the church, which are called the goods of love and the truths of faith are changed into evils and falsities, is signified by 'the sun and moon shall be obscured and darkened, and the stars shall not give their light;' the Last Judgment that then follows is meant by 'the day of Jehovah great and terrible;' and as this comes when the church is in darkness and in thick darkness, that day is also called 'a day of darkness and thick darkness,' and also 'a day of cloud and obscurity'..."

AC 1808 [4]

- "Every one can see that by 'the stars' and 'constellations' here are not meant the stars and constellations, but things true and good; and by 'the sun,' love;

and by 'the moon,' faith; for the evils of falsities which cause darkness are treated of." *Joel 3:15* is cited.

HH 119

- "In these passages [*Joel 3:15* is cited] the 'sun' signifies love, and the 'moon' faith, and the 'stars' knowledges of good and truth. These are said to be darkened, to lose their light, and to fall from heaven, when they are no more."

Doctrine of Sacred Scripture 14 [3]

- "That there is not meant a darkening of the sun and moon, nor a falling of the stars to the earth, is very evident from the Prophets, in which like things are said about the state of the church when the Lord should come into the world."

AR 51

- "...that by 'stars' are signified the knowledges of good and truth from the Word...may appear from these passages..." *Joel 3:15* is cited.

AR 312

- "That 'black' in the Word, is spoken of falsity, may appear from these passages..." *Joel 3:15* is cited.

TCR 198

- "...in the spiritual sense 'the sun' that shall be darkened means love to the Lord; 'the moon' that shall not give her light means faith in the Lord; 'the stars' that shall fall from heaven mean knowledges of what is true and good... That this does not mean the darkening of the sun and moon and the falling of the stars to earth, is very clear from like statements in the prophets respecting the state of the church, when the Lord was about to come into the world; as in...*Joel...3:15...*"

TCR 620

- *Joel 3:15* is cited. "...darkness would be upon the earth...It would be the same with man without truths, which send out light from themselves; for the sun from which the light of truths flows forth is the Lord in the spiritual world. If spiritual light did not flow therefrom into human minds, the church would be in mere darkness, or in shadow from a perpetual eclipse."

AE 72 [4]

- "‘Darkness upon the land’ means falsities in the church. In Joel...3:15..."

AE 372 [3]

- "...by ‘I will make the stars thereof dark,’ ‘stars’ meaning knowledges of truth... ‘and the moon shall not make her light to shine,’ ‘sun’ signifying the good of love, and ‘moon’ the truth of faith." *Joel 3:15* is cited as an example.

Derived Doctrine

"Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe."

- A "sickle" signifies "the Divine truth of the Word...because by a ‘harvest’ is signified the state of the church as to Divine truth, here its last state; therefore by ‘reaping,’ which is done with a sickle, is here signified to put an end to the state of the church, and to execute judgment..." (*AR 643*).
- A "harvest" signifies the last state of the church preceding the Last Judgment when everyone is explored by the Lord and there is a separation of the evil from the good (*AE 908*).
- "Ripe" has some interesting meanings. *AC 5117* describes its meaning as the progress of rebirth or regeneration. In the "unripe" state, truth predominates. But when good has the primacy, the "ripe" state exists. *AR 645* defines "ripe" as the last state of the old church. *AE 911* says "ripe" signifies the time to collect the good and to separate them from the evil.

"Come, go down; for the winepress is full. The vats overflow—for their wickedness is great."

- To "go down" signifies to move toward the exterior or lower natural and earthly things (*AC 5406*). To "come down" when said of the Lord signifies judgment (*AC 1311*).
- A "winepress" signifies in the negative sense violence offered to divine truth (*AE 922 [5]*). *AR 651* teaches that a winepress signifies an examination of the quality of works, and the quality is determined by the products (uses).
- "The ‘vats’ overflow—for their wickedness is great": we need some lead-in to achieve a glimpse of the spiritual sense of this phrase. *AE 644 [15]* develops a series of positive things that have a "vat overflow." It speaks of the Lord's continual influx into truths with the good of love. From this influx, a person has a good love towards a brother or companion, and from this they have the truth and good of love to the Lord. *AE 695 [23]* explores the negative sense of "vats" overflowing, noting that "The floor and the wine shall not feed them" signifies failure to draw from the Word the good things of charity and love. The wine vat signifies the Word in respect to the goods of love, and the "vat"

means they were so full of themselves that they had no room for the good of charity and love. *AE 922 [3]* teaches that the "vats" overflowing signifies that there was nothing except falsities from evils. And what were the results of this? They separated faith from charity and made faith without works "the law of saving."

- "Wickedness" needs a moment of reflection so we can clearly define it and know more accurately what effect wickedness has on our lives. What is at the heart of wickedness? Consider this quote from *AE 257 [7]*: wickedness signifies **"all the falsities of evil committed to the complete destruction of good and truth in a person."**

"Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision."

- *AE 750 [10]* has this explanation for "multitudes." "Multitudes" (hordes) signify the false beliefs and wrong opinions of those who array themselves against the truths and goods of the church.
- When the word "multitude" is used twice, it is not for effect or emphasis. When one word is repeated, it speaks of a heavenly marriage in the positive sense. In the negative sense, it represents the effort of evil to destroy the conjugal principle of the will and understanding.
- "The valley of decision" needs to be looked at from two vantages. A "valley" represents the natural portions of the mind where battles occur between truth and falsity. A "valley" signifies what is external in worship "wherein is what is profane." (*AC 1292*) "Decision" is identified with a church that has come to "its old age, or its winter, or its night; and its time and state then are called 'decision,' and 'fulfillment.'" (*AC 2905*)

"For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision."

- "Day of the Lord" signifies vastation and the last time and state of the church (*AC 488 [3]* and *AC 1839 [5]*).

Putting It All Together

P&P summarizes this section as "Then evil is consummated." The word "consummated" means to bring to completion, to sum up, or to carry to the utmost extent.

The consummation of the external church did not take place on the mountain of the Lord. It took place in the "valley of decision." Therefore, we are looking at the last days of the external church. The Lord was coming to the harvest of that church. His "sickle" had to sort things out from the "harvest." Judgment in the Word is often depicted as a man sitting down on the shore to separate good fish from bad fish. Or it is presented as the sheep being separated from the goats. Such a day of decision

was crucial. The Word had, for many years, been falsified. Errors, misdeeds, and falsity during that long period of time had gained credence within the church. Falsity was accepted as truth, and truth was being accepted as falsity. Vastation came to the church so that "spiritual things" could be emptied out and freed from the smothering effects of the hells. Truth was to be ousted. Falsity was to be removed and banished from the church.

Is it any wonder then that the Writings gave us many quotes regarding the meaning of the sun, moon, and stars losing their light? Falsity was blocking out the Lord who is our "sun of heaven." Falsity was causing the "moon of faith" to lose its reflection of the light of the sun. Falsity caused the "stars" of knowledge to fall from the heavens.

Exploration came from the Lord so that violence to the Word would end. "Multitudes" and "multitudes" of false beliefs and wrong opinions had arrayed themselves against the Lord, but their day, their end, was at hand. The external church, a church in a state of "old age," a church in a "winter" state, a church in a state of "night" was being called into the valley of decision.

Who did the calling? It was the Lord, the sun of heaven, who is true and mighty. What will this day of decision be like? *Isaiah 60:4-5*, in a prophecy of the advent of the Lord, captures this day of enlightenment with these words:

"Lift up your eyes all around, and see...**you shall see and become radiant, and your heart shall swell with joy...**"

Read and Reflect

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 3:13-15*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. The process of the sun, moon, and stars losing their light is a theme found in many prophecies of the Old Testament and in the New Testament. Have you, by now, pictured the meaning and the process of this happening to the previous churches?
2. Will this same thing happen to the organized New Church on earth?
3. *Isaiah 60:20* promises that the spiritual New Church will not experience the loss of the sun, moon, and stars. Listen to that prophecy: "Your sun shall no longer go down, nor shall your moon withdraw itself; for the Lord will be your everlasting light, and the days of your mourning shall be ended."

4. Isn't this a wonderful state to look forward to?
5. Can you picture the Lord with His sickle harvesting the field of the "old," "tired," "winter" state of the consummated church?

JOEL 3:16-17

"The Lord also will roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; the heavens and earth will shake; but the Lord will be a shelter for His people, and the strength of the children of Israel. So you shall know that I am the Lord your God, dwelling in Zion My holy mountain. Then Jerusalem shall be holy, and no aliens shall ever pass through her again."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "This is from the Lord, whom they will then also acknowledge, and from whom is the church."

AC 7573 [3]

- "In Joel...3:...16...the 'voice of Jehovah' denotes truth Divine; that it is said to be 'from Jerusalem' is because by 'Jerusalem' is signified the Lord's spiritual kingdom, in which are they who are in good from truth, and in truth from good."

AC 9926 [6]

- "...that 'the voice' in this passage denotes Divine truth, consequently the Word of the Lord, is manifest." *Joel 3:16* is cited.

AR 37

- "...'voice' signifies the Divine truth from the Lord..." *Joel 3:16* is cited.

AR 471

- "...'His roaring as a lion,' for a lion roars when he sees his enemies and is assaulted by them...so does the Lord, comparatively, when He sees His church taken away from Him by devils. That this is what is signified by 'roaring as a lion,' may appear from these passages..." *Joel 3:16* is cited.

AE 261 [3 & 4]

- "The voice of Jehovah'...is the Divine proceeding, or Divine truth, from which is all intelligence and wisdom..." *Joel 3:16* is cited.

AE 601 [6]

- "In Joel...3:16...The protection of the faithful by the Lord by means of Divine truth is described by 'Jehovah shall roar out of Zion, and shall give forth His voice from Jerusalem;' the vehement power of Divine truth, and consequent terror, are described by 'the heavens and the earth shall quake;' and salvation and protection by 'Jehovah shall be a shelter for His people, and a stronghold for the sons of Israel;' 'the people of Jehovah' and 'the sons of Israel' being the faithful who are of the church."

AR 612

- "Hence by 'Zion' and 'Jerusalem' are signified the inmost things of the church...but by 'Zion' the church as to love, and by 'Jerusalem' the church as to doctrine from love. It is called 'mount Zion' because by 'a mountain' is signified love...That by 'mount Zion' is signified heaven and the church where the Lord alone is worshiped, may appear from the following passages..." *Joel 3:16, 17, and 21* are cited.

AE 850 [15]

- "In Joel...3:16, 17, 21...'To roar,' and the 'roaring of a lion,' when predicated of Jehovah, signify an ardent zeal for protecting heaven and the church, and for saving those who are therein by the Divine truth and its power, which is done by destroying the evils and falsities that rise up out of hell...and as 'Zion' signifies heaven where the Lord reigns by the Divine truth, and 'Jerusalem' signifies doctrine therefrom, it is clear what is signified by 'Jehovah shall roar out of Zion, and shall utter His voice from Jerusalem.' That the Lord is present where He reigns by His Divine truth, both with the angels of heaven and with the men of the church, is signified by 'ye shall know that I am Jehovah, dwelling in Zion, the mountain of My holiness.' That there shall be no falsities of evil there is signified by 'no strangers shall pass through her,' 'strangers' being the falsities of evil."

AC 10287 [9]

- "And in Joel...3:17...'Jerusalem' denotes the church, but that in which the Lord is acknowledged, men live in good, and believe in the truths which are from the Lord; that 'strangers shall not pass through her any more' denotes that the evils and falsities of evil which are from hell shall not enter."

AE 405 [26]

- "...Jerusalem is called 'the mountain of holiness'...[because this signifies] spiritual good, which in its essence is truth from good, as can be seen from the following passages." *Joel 3:17* is cited.

AR 336

- "...a mountain signified heaven and love...And for the same reason the Lord was transfigured before Peter, James, and John, upon a high mountain...And on this account Zion was upon a mountain, and also Jerusalem, and they are called 'the mountain of Jehovah,' and 'the mountain of Holiness,' in many parts of the Word." *Joel 3:17-18* is cited.

Doctrine of the Lord 64 [7 & 8]

- "'Jerusalem' means a church from the Lord...which was to be set up anew by the Lord, and which actually was set up anew by Him, and not the Jerusalem in the land of Canaan that was inhabited by the Jews..." *Joel 3:17-20* is cited as an example text.

AR 880

- "By 'Jerusalem' is also meant the church from the Lord in the following passages..." *Joel 3:17, 18, and 20* are cited.

Brief Exposition 100

- "That by 'Jerusalem' is meant the church, is very clear from the prophecies in the Old Testament concerning a New Church to be established by the Lord, wherein it is called 'Jerusalem.'" *Joel 3:17-20* is among the many passages cited.

TCR 782

- "That 'Jerusalem' means the church can be clearly seen from the prophecies in the Old Testament respecting the new church to be established by the Lord, in that it is there called 'Jerusalem.'" *Joel 3:17-21* is cited.

TCR 789

- "...other prophets have made many predictions respecting this church, what its character would be, a few of which shall be cited..." *Joel 3:17-21* is cited.

AC 3881 [6]

- "That by 'Judah' is not meant Judah; but, as already said, in the internal sense the Lord's celestial kingdom...may also be clearly seen from the following passages..." *Joel 3:17, 18, and 20* are cited.

Derived Doctrine

"...the heavens and earth will shake..."

- The Lord's first advent reordered all of the heavens and the earth. "The 'heavens' are the celestial and spiritual things (thus the inmost things) of both the Lord's kingdom in the heavens, and the Lord's kingdom on the earth, that is in the church, and also in every man...the 'earth' is all lower things...as the lower rational and natural things..." (*AC 2162*)
- To "shake" signifies to divest the heart and mind of unclean things (*AC 1748*). To "shake" signifies to get rid of evil lest what is damned should adhere (*AE 365 [8]*).

"...the Lord will be a shelter for His people, and the strength of the children of Israel."

- The word "shelter" has no correspondential explanation in *The Swedenborg Concordance*. There is a suggestion made by Alice Sechrist, in *A Dictionary of Bible Imagery*, to look at the correspondence of "shade," "shadow," or "cloud" when considering the word "shelter." Let's see if the explanation of a "cloud" offers any meanings that could apply to "shelter" as well.
- A "cloud" signifies "...the ultimate of the Word, which is therefore relatively obscure...That this is 'the cloud' is because the Divine truth which is from the Lord cannot possibly appear in the very brightness in which it is, for man would thereby perish, because his understanding would be totally blinded by the light of truth, and his will would be wholly extinguished by the fire of good; thus all his life would be annihilated. Hence it is that Divine truth is accommodated to each person's apprehension, and as it were veiled with a cloud..." (*AC 9433*)
- The strength, the fortification, of the Lord is His truth, which cannot be resisted (*AC 426 [3]*). The Lord's strength is the Divine good and truth in the church (*AE 288 [4]*).

"So you shall know that I am the Lord your God..."

- To be able to "know" and "name" the Lord is an important part of the process of making that which is invisible visible. To "name" signifies to know the essence or quality of all the affections of the Lord that are to be worshiped (*AC 2724*).

- "You shall know" is both a positive and encouraging idea to hold within the heart during this period of "shaking" the heavens and earth, this vastation of the dead church.

Putting It All Together

"This is from the Lord..." *P&P* teaches that the new church will come to acknowledge the Lord and will know that the church is from Him.

The Lord as a "roaring lion" is not a reference to the sound of anger. Instead, the roar of the Lord is filled with a loving zeal to protect His beloved. The Lord "roars" when He sees His church being carried away by devils. He roars when He sees His enemies assaulting the faithful within the church. His mighty roar strikes terror in the heart of the hells.

His roar is not all noise signifying nothing. He steadily saw to the reordering of the heavens and earth. He caused His truth to bring about a spiritual shaking to rid the church of unclean things. The shaking helped to rid the new church of the "dust" of falsity so that it wouldn't adhere to the mind and heart of the new church. While the hells were being consummated, the Lord spoke words of comfort to the faithful.

- "I will be your shelter and I will be the strength, or fortification, of My people."
- "You will know Me. You will know that I am the Lord your God."
- "The church will be holy."
- "Aliens, evils and falsities which are from hell, shall not enter or pass through the New Church again."
- The Lord assures us that the church will live in good and will believe in the truths which are from Him.

"This is from the Lord..." and not anyone else. For the Lord has spoken. And it is so!

Read and Reflect

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 3:16-17*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. When you read the Word, do you hear the comforting "roaring" of the Lord?
2. Can you imagine the great trembling that hell goes through when we listen to the leading of the Word?

3. What was your impression of the meaning of "cloud" in place of the word "shelter"? Does it seem to communicate what the word "shelter" might mean in the spiritual sense?
4. That teaching about aliens not coming into the Church ever again had my heart crying out "How long O Lord?" I would love to see the evils and falsities of the world gone. I would love for the pretentious shams to leave us alone. What are your wishes for the day when truth will be truth, falsity will be falsity, and never will the two be mistaken for one another?
5. The Lord promises that the church will live in good and believe in the truths that are from Him. **This is from the Lord.** Does hell want us to doubt the validity of His promise? Why?

JOEL 3:18-19

"And it will come to pass in that day that the mountains shall drip with new wine, the hills shall flow with milk, and all the brooks of Judah shall be flooded with water; a fountain shall flow from the house of the Lord and water the Valley of Acacias. Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom a desolate wilderness, because of violence against the people of Judah, for they have shed innocent blood in their land. But Judah shall abide forever and Jerusalem from generation to generation."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "The Lord will then teach them the Word, and falsifications of the Word will be removed."

AC 2184 [6]

- "In Joel...3:18...Speaking of the Lord's kingdom; 'milk' denotes the celestial spiritual. In the Word the land of Canaan also (by which the Lord's kingdom is represented and signified) is called a 'land flowing with milk and honey'...and in these passages nothing else is meant by 'milk' than an abundance of celestial spiritual things, and by 'honey' an abundance of the derivative happinesses; the 'land' is the celestial itself of the kingdom, from which those things come."

AC 2702 [7]

- "That a 'fountain' is the Word, or doctrine from it is plain also in Joel...3:18... where 'waters' denote truths; and a 'fountain out of the house of Jehovah,' the Lord's Word."

AC 3580 [7]

- This passage refers to *Joel 3:18*, "...where the Lord's kingdom is treated of; and by 'sweet wine,' by 'milk,' and by 'waters,' are signified spiritual things whose abundance is thus described."

AC 6435 [10]

- In *Joel 3:18* "...the goods of celestial love are signified by 'mountains;' and likewise by 'hills,' but in a lower degree."

AR 316

- "That 'oil' signifies the good of love will be seen...but that 'wine' signifies truth from that good is evident from the following passages..." *Joel 3:18* is cited among other passages.

AR 409

- "That 'rivers' signify truths in abundance may be evident from the following passages..." *Joel 3:18* is cited.

AE 376 [5]

- "In *Joel 3:18*...This treats of the Lord's coming, and of the new heaven and the new church from Him. It is well known that the mountains in the land of Canaan, or in Judea, did not then drop down sweet wine, nor the hills flow with milk, nor the water-courses of Judah flow with waters more than before, therefore these words must mean something else than new wine, milk, and waters, or than mountains, hills, and water-courses, namely, 'that the mountains shall drop down sweet wine...' or wine...means that from the good of love to the Lord there shall be genuine truth; 'the hills shall flow with milk' means that from the good of charity towards the neighbor there shall be spiritual life; and 'all the water-courses of Judah shall flow with waters' means that from the particulars of the Word there shall be truths. (For 'Judah' signifies the Lord's celestial kingdom, and also the Word, see A.C., n. 3881, 6363; therefore 'its water-courses' signify the particulars of the Word; that 'mountains' signify the good of love to the Lord...And 'hills' the good of charity towards the neighbor...and this because in heaven those who are in the good of love to the Lord dwell upon mountains, and those who are in the good of charity towards the neighbor dwell upon hills...)"

AE 405 [7]

- "In Joel...3:18...This treats of the Lord's coming and of the new heaven and new earth at that time; 'the mountains shall drop down sweet wine' means that all truth shall be from the good of love to the Lord; 'the hills shall flow with milk' means that there shall be spiritual life from the good of charity towards the neighbor; and 'all the water-courses of Judah shall flow with waters' means that there shall be truths from the particulars of the Word, through which there is intelligence."

AE 483 [5]

- "In Joel...3:18...What is signified by 'the mountains shall drop down must [sweet wine], and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the water-courses of Judah shall flow with waters,' may be seen explained above (n. 433c); and that 'a fountain shall go forth out of the house of Jehovah and shall water the brook of Shittim' signifies that there shall be truth out of heaven from the Lord illustrating the knowledges and cognitions that are in the natural man."

AE 518 [10]

- "In Joel...3:18...'The fountain that shall go forth out of the house of Jehovah' signifies the truth of doctrine out of heaven from the Lord; and 'the brook of Shittim that it shall water,' signifies the illustration of the understanding."

AC 3654 [9]

- "So in Joel...3:18, 20...from all the particulars in this passage also it is manifest that by 'Judah' is not meant Judah, nor by 'Jerusalem,' Jerusalem, but those who are in the holy of love and of charity; for these 'shall abide forever, and to generation and generation.'"

Doctrine of Sacred Scripture 51 [8]

- "He who reads the Word without doctrine does not see the consistency of what is said in the Prophets about the Jewish nation and Jerusalem—that the church with that nation, and its seat in that city, will remain to eternity; as in the following passages...Joel 3:18-20...In these passages the Lord's advent is treated of, and that this [establishment of the Jews] will then come to pass."

AE 433c [13]

- "In Joel...3:18-20...Here, too, the Lord's coming and a new heaven and a new earth at that time are treated of. 'The mountains shall drop down must [sweet wine]' signifies that all truth will be from the good of love (that

'mountains' signify the good of love see above, n 405a-f; and that 'wine' and 'must' signify truth see also above, n. 376a-f). 'The hills shall flow with milk' signifies that spiritual life will be from the good of charity towards the neighbor; and 'all the water-courses of Judah shall flow with waters' signifies that from the particulars of the Word there will be truths, through which there will be intelligence; 'a fountain shall go forth out of the house of Jehovah, and shall water the brook of Shittim,' signifies that out of heaven from the Lord there will be truth of doctrine that will illustrate those who are in cognitions and knowledges; 'Egypt shall be a waste, and Edom shall be a waste wilderness' signifies that false principles, and the evils of the love of self, both from the natural man, will be destroyed; 'because of the violence to the sons of Judah, whose innocent blood they have shed in their land,' signifies because of the truths of the Word falsified and its goods adulterated, which they have corrupted and destroyed; 'Judah shall sit to eternity, and Jerusalem to generation and generation,' signifies that the Word and the doctrine of genuine truth therefrom will remain to eternity with those who are in love to the Lord. This makes clear that 'Judah' does not here mean Judah, nor 'Jerusalem' Jerusalem."

AC 6353 [8]

- A 'man of violence' denotes those who destroy the truths of faith and the goods of charity; their fighting against these truths and goods..." *Joel 3:19* is cited.

AC 9262 [7]

- "In the proximate sense 'the innocent' signifies one who is without guilt and without evil..." *Joel 3:19* is cited.

AR 503

- "'Egypt,' in the opposite sense, signifies the natural man separated from the spiritual, and then the pride of his own intelligence, and thence insanity in spiritual things, in these passages...Joel 3:19..."

AR 546

- "That by 'wilderness' is signified the church devastated, or in which all the truths of the Word are falsified, such as it was among the Jews in the Lord's time, appears from these passages...Joel 3:19..."

AE 654 [72]

- "In Joel...3:19...'Egypt shall be a waste' signifies that the natural man will be without truths, and thus in mere falsities; 'and Edom a waste wilderness' signifies that the natural man will be without goods and thence in mere evils; 'because of the violence to the sons of Judah, whose innocent blood they have shed,' signifies because they have offered violence to the truths and goods of the Word, which they have perverted."

AE 730 [20]

- "In Joel...3:19...'Egypt' and 'Edom' signify the natural man that has perverted the truths and goods of the Word; that it is to be so destroyed as to see only such things as serve for confirmation is signified by 'Egypt shall be a waste, and Edom a waste wilderness;' that this will be because of the adulteration of every good and truth in the Word is signified by 'because of the violence to the sons of Judah, whose innocent blood they have shed;' 'violence to the sons of Judah' signifying the adulteration of the Word in respect to good, and 'shedding innocent blood' the adulteration of the Word in respect to its truths. (That 'Judah' signifies the celestial church, and also the Word...and that 'shedding innocent blood' signifies to do violence to Divine truth, thus to adulterate the truth of the Word...) The adulteration of the Word is effected by the knowledges (scientifica) of the natural man when these are applied to confirm falsities and evils, and the natural man becomes a 'waste' and a 'wilderness' when his knowledges are used to confirm falsity and evil; 'Egypt' signifies such knowledges, and 'Edom' the pride that falsifies by means of these."

Derived Doctrine

With twenty direct quotes from the Writings, there is little need for us to use derived doctrine this time.

Putting It All Together

P&P summarizes these passages this way: "The Lord will teach them the Word, and falsifications of the Word will be removed."

And how will the Lord do this? Let's look at the steps outlined in our text:

1. The Lord will cause spiritual forces to "come to pass." His Divine influx will organize and put into place new beginnings, a fresh start with the states of the new heavens and the new church.

2. The good of love to the Lord (genuine truths) and the good of charity toward the neighbor will become the centerpiece of the church's spiritual life.
3. The Lord will open the Word so that the particular truths from the Word will be illustrated. Knowledges and cognitions will be highlighted to the natural side of each person.
4. The particulars from the Word will be like an abundant fountain flowing into the heart and mind, bringing inspiration and great happiness.
5. The former sadness of Egypt and Edom will be no more. What was the sadness of Egypt and Edom? Egypt was the pride of intelligence, and Edom was the pride of self-love. What did these two bring to the church? The slaughter of innocence and the falsification of the Word.
6. The Lord, with His coming, will show what desolation and waste these two attitudes had while seeming to be in charge of the church.
7. The mountains will drip with "new wine." The hills will flow with "milk." The brooks of Judah shall be flooded with "water," and "a fountain shall flow from the house of the Lord." Is there any doubt as to what these things signify regarding the restoration of the Word and the Lord's church with the new church?

The Lord will teach [us] the Word, and the falsification of the Word will be removed.

Read and Reflect

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 3:18-19*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Can we put some examples before us that represent Egypt's love of self-intelligence and Edom's love of self?
2. Are any of the examples you picked examples of acts that do harm to the church and kill the innocent?
3. Think for a minute about some verse, chapter, or lesson from the Word that illustrates some special truth for you. What were your feelings when this part of the Word opened up for you? Do the Writings give us that feeling of

illustrating the truth? Do the Writings help us love the Lord and love the neighbor on a deeper level? How?

4. Once again, we have the positive voice of optimism and good winning out over evil. The Lord is taking away the falsity of hell, instructing us in the way of order. Isn't it refreshing to read this message again and again?

JOEL 3:20-21

"But Judah shall abide forever and Jerusalem from generation to generation. For I will acquit them of the guilt of bloodshed, whom I had not acquitted; for the Lord dwells in Zion."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Then the church will be the Lord's and from the Word."

AC 6239 [5]

- "And in Joel...3:20...'eternity' is here predicated of Judah, because by Judah is represented the celestial church...and 'generation and generation' is predicated of Jerusalem, because by 'Jerusalem' is signified the spiritual church..."

AC 10248 [10]

- "...Joel 3:20...Where by 'Judah' is signified the celestial church, of which it is therefore said, 'according to the days of an age,' is signified the spiritual church, of which it is said ...'to generation and generation.'"

AR 350

- "...by 'the tribe of Judah' is signified celestial love, which is love to the Lord; but because they were such as to the Word, and as to the Lord, therefore by 'the tribe of Judah' is also signified the opposite love, which is the love of self, properly the love of dominion from the love of self, which love is called diabolical love. That by 'Judah' and his tribe is signified the celestial kingdom and its love, which is love to the Lord, is evident from these passages...Joel 3:20..."

Derived Doctrine

"...Judah shall abide forever..."

- The word "abide" in the *New English Bible* has been translated as "to remain united." This addition of the word "forever" certainly enhances the meaning. The celestial church (Judah) will remain forever united with the Lord.

"I will acquit them of the guilt of bloodshed, whom I had not acquitted..."

- The word "acquit" means to clear, purge, discharge as a debt, to pronounce as not guilty, or to exculpate. Does the word "forgive" seem to apply as well?
- "Guilt" involves rejecting good and truth (*AC 5469*).
- "To shed blood" signifies offering violence to good (*AC 3400*).
- We have little help with "whom I had not acquitted." Does this mean that some people were not acquitted for all things of which they were guilty? Does this indicate that some responsibility for allowing themselves to be led away from the Lord had yet to be cleared up?
- The promise is that the Lord will forgive (acquit) where there is a spirit of repentance.

"...for the Lord dwells in Zion."

- **This is the closing statement of this prophecy;** we must look here for the summation of all that preceded it. *AE 594 [15]* teaches that "The dwelling place of Mount Zion' signifies the good of the celestial church..."
- "Zion" signifies heaven and the church where the Lord alone is worshipped (*AR 612*). "Zion" signifies the advent of the Lord, and the establishment of the church by Him among those who are in the good of love (*AE 433 [8]*).

The prophecy of Joel began with the declaration that the Word had been devastated by the falsities of "the sensual man and afterwards evil therefrom," which "consumed all things of the church." The plague of the locusts dramatically illustrated this for us.

The last verse of Joel's prophecy ends with an affirmation that all has been made right. Evil, the falsification of the Word, the power of self-intelligence, the power of self-love will not prevail against the Lord's celestial church. The conjugal principle of Divine Love and Divine Truth will forever "abide" in the Lord's New Church. With the Lord dwelling in Zion forever, the heavens and the church can rejoice and feel safe again.

The *P&P* summary of this closing verse triumphantly heralds the Lord's message:

"Then the church will be the Lord's and from the Word."

Putting It All Together

The closing statement, as outlined above, seems to pull things together. Forgiveness; acquittal; a returning of the faithful to a church where the Lord is at the center; the cleansing of the Word from all of the falsities the dead church had surrounded it with—these themes make quite a closing statement. The Lord is in His Heavens, and all is right with His people and His church.

Read and Reflect

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Joel 3:20-21*.

Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. These verses talk about acquittal for those who did violence to the Word. Does this strike you as an answer to those who try to portray the Lord as a hard and stern taskmaster? Isn't there a sense of forgiveness that is needed when we err in our spiritual thoughts?
2. How will you go about reviewing the three chapters of *Joel*? Do you think you will use the Epilogue section to do this? The Epilogue can't do it all for you, but it can form an outline for your review.
3. Do you think you might go back over some of the notes to pick out your favorite points? For instance, there is the section where the army of hell leaps up the walls and breaks in through the windows. For all of their bravado and appearance of being in step, what was their end?
4. Or you might revisit that chapter where remains are defined in a way that I don't recall ever hearing about in a class or lecture. Look at page 97. Read *AC 5897 [5 & 6]*. Why is this a passage worth remembering?
5. What will you remember about the positive progression of this prophecy? Out of hellish disorder, the Lord's Church rises with a sense of victory and joy. How can we retain that feeling of hope in our daily battles against hell?
6. I hope you have gained much from this study. I also hope it will inspire you to continue with the whole series of twelve study guides on the Minor Prophets. Our need is to study daily the Word of the Lord. Is this method helping you to achieve that reflection time with the Word?

Epilogue: A Summary of the Three Chapters of Joel

The following summary draws and expands on the outline given in the Summary Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms.

CHAPTER ONE

The message of the prophecy of Joel is for all people. It is a message that needs to be shared with our children, the children of our children, and their children to another generation.

What is the story the Lord, through the prophecy of Joel, wants us to tell them? We are to tell them about the dangers of the "sensual man." The sensual person is not interested in, nor cares for, spiritual things. The sensual person does not look toward the life that awaits the soul after death. Immediate gratification is of greater importance to the sensual person, and therefore sensual people become vulnerable to a myriad of philosophical, scientific, and self-centered arguments that induce hateful and oppositional feelings toward the Lord and His Word. The falsity from the sensual person and afterwards the evil therefrom "consumes all things of the church."

The plagues of the four kinds of locust represent the intent of the spiritual attack hell waged on the Word. There are the "gnawers," the "swarmers," "the lickers," and "the consumers." With the terrifying sound of the beating of their wings, and numbers so great, they blocked out the light of the sun, they consumed all things in wave after wave of their attack. They stripped the external church, and its doctrines from the Word, bare.

A call for repentance was made by the Lord. The Lord provided examples of how the evil of the sensual people worked, and He illustrated the kind of destruction they brought to the church.

A call for mourning was issued by the Lord. He wanted the people to sincerely grieve over the destruction of the goods and truths of the church.

The Lord delivered an exhortation to be converted and to reflect that the "day of the Lord" was at hand. The Lord announced the imminent approach of His advent. This advent was crucial because everything of the church was devastated, and thus, there were serious reasons to lament over the state of the Word and church.

CHAPTER TWO

Because the sensual people had destroyed the "whole church" with falsities and evil, it was time for the Lord to come and execute His judgment. The variety of insanities of the sensual people caused good and truth, and knowledges, to be dispersed.

The Lord was going to wage war against the sensual people. He blew the trumpet to sound the alarm. His approach would cause those who were opposed to Him to tremble. Upon the proud and resistant, there was to be a terrible judgment. The evil felt the approach of the Lord, and they did not want to lose their power.

So the evil took on the appearance of "steed horses." They hooked themselves up to chariots. They started fires in the stubble of the field. A call was made to form up a mighty army. They lined up in a formation and did not break rank. They lunged with their weapons, running throughout the city. They climbed the walls of the city, breaking through the windows of the houses like thieves.

The battle was not without some temporary negative aspects. The action of the sensual person caused the darkening of the sun and moon, and it made the stars of heaven fall from the sky.

Another call was made by the Lord to His people. He asked them to return to Him with "all your heart, with fasting, with weeping and mourning...Rend your hearts and not your garments." The exhortation here is to be converted and repent, and to be wise.

We are taught that the Lord will establish the church again; He will give it goods and truths, and He will remove evil and thus hell. The new church will have trust in the Lord and will acknowledge Him from the heart. The Divine of the Lord will fill those of the new church with all things, and He will vivify them. Falsities of evil and evils of falsity will dissipate in the "day of His judgment." Those who acknowledge the Lord will be saved.

The theme of this chapter is a call to "awake," to hear the Word of the Lord and respond to His battle cry. For there is no doubt regarding the outcome of this battle: The Lord will, in the end, win the battle for His Word and His Church.

CHAPTER THREE

The church will be gathered together, and the great judgment will be executed upon those who resisted the Lord and were responsible for the scattering of the goods and truths of the church. Those who sought to separate the conjugal principle with their focus on faith "alone" and knowledges "alone," and who thereby had destroyed the Word and doctrine, would face the consequences of their decisions. The light of heaven would be restored. The sun, moon, and stars would be seen again.

We are taught that the Lord's Divine Love and Divine Wisdom will be too much for the evil. In His presence, their evil will be consummated. Their reign of terror, their variety of insanities and boastful claims will be removed under the guidance of our powerful and loving Lord.

For the remnant, there will be a spirit of newness in the truth taught to them. They will be acquitted, lifted, and forgiven. A new form of illustration of the truths of the Word will enter their life. Forgiveness will be extended to those who made errors of judgment and had misunderstood the Word. Let us listen to the closing statement of the Writings regarding the outcome of this great judgment:

Then the church "will be the Lord's" and the church will be "from the Word."

Until these events occur, *Joel 3:10* reminds us that we are to remain very courageous:

"Let the weak say, 'I am strong.'"