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Substance of Sermon preached by our Pastor
on Sunday Afternoon, July 25. 1982.

Lesson. Genesis 45. vv. 25-28. & Genesis 48.

And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army ~~army~~ which I sent among you. And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed. Joel 2. 25-26.

Just to take up the vital thread of divine truth from this morning, let us mention that the prophet Joel, divinely appointed and with a wonderful vision of the New Testament times, especially in relation to the day of Pentecost and the amazing pouring out of the Spirit on all flesh, on those chosen of God of all nations. This is not a promiscuous word but it is for Jews and Gentiles, as the apostle Peter experienced on the day of Pentecost, and when he was so signally, vitally called to minister to the Gentile Cornelius and his household. We touched on reproof and correction for sin in the form of noxious insects, especially the locust. We might dilate on this. For instance, every green and succulent thing was consumed in the human race when Satan tempted Adam and Eve and they succumbed to the vile temptation to violate what God had commanded. Nothing was left of greenness, beauty, blessedness. It was total, complete ruin, and the wicked, deceitful heart of man contains a plague of locusts that consume every green thing. Sometimes ^{the power} of Satan is so great in relation to those you love so in trial and distress every green thing seems to be consumed. You look round and feel a sense of dismay, and also in the path of adversity. For the richest man of the East with his large family and substance entered the sorest adversity that was as a plague of locusts. Nearly everything was gone and his own poor body smitten, and his wife giving diabolical counsel to curse God and die. My friends, however low, dark, distressed, fearful, with bereavements devastating every green thing, if the Lord loves you this is a word to sound on the trumpet of the gospel: restoration. The Lord will restore to you the years the locusts have eaten. Was Job restored? Was all restored to him? The principle

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thing is the presence and blessing and joy of the Lord in the soul. Job saw the day when he said, "But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." He was restored, and the Lord wonderfully restored his substance and family. It is because of the vital principle of God in His boundless love and Covenant of Grace, and the glorious victory of the Lord Jesus. manifested in His wondrous resurrection from the dead that the Lord restores His dear people.

We also made reference to the fatherly word of exhortation to the Lord's people, "And rend your heart" - a broken and contrite spirit, a sacrifice acceptable to God. And immediately the Lord said, "Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the Lord will do great things." There are those things in store for you. There is an expectation, a prospect that will bring eternal praise, renown, glory and honour to your God. It is a beautiful word, "And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten." We have had a demonstration of it in the Lesson. That is why I read the last paragraph, dear Israel after many years of being in a most distressed, tempted, dark state of mind the Lord suddenly turned the whole of his captivity, for he said, "It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die." The Lord gave him far more than he could have anticipated. He said to Joseph later, when he was ill - and he was a happy ill man - why? Because he was waiting for the chariot and the angels to fetch him to Glory. In the midst of commanding his sons he said, and I love the beautiful word: some will appreciate it who have known deliverance, pardon and peace and are waiting for the time when He will come again and receive you to Himself. Remember the text of the Lord's Day afternoon when Mr Jupp was here: I believe Jacob could see the chariot. It had come, it was close to him, and he said, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord." Some of you are there, you wait. Think of the inexpressible joy, the ecstasy of divine joy of your soul when you feel the Lord is close to you, and you are about to enter the chariot to go to Glory. O the wonder of it!

So the question I would ask is, what about the word, restoration? With all the patriarch waded through; afflictions, bereavements, agony, the cruelty of his sons, and they knew it was like putting a dagger through his heart - was he restored, and were the years restored to him?

You know, you beloved family of God in this place, perfectly well, one blissful smile from His sweet face restores all to you. We were praying for several things; that He would smile on us; that does it. A frown is terrible to bear; a sweet smile is heavenly. Everything is pendant on a communication from the divine fulness, when He looks, and loves, and smiles. You know what that does for you. I have made reference to and I understand more now than when I heard it from his lips, on his account and my own - dear Mr J.H.Gosden when he was here seemed to be in a low place in mind and body. I believe he hardly knew how to get here because of weakness - he said to me, I believe it was in the vestry, "You know, I need a smile from the Lord." What about this, dear friends? do you need a smile from His sweet face? We were praying for it and for the kisses of His mouth, when He goes to meet and kiss a weeping child. You have got forgiveness, peace, a foretaste of Heaven in your soul. You are happy and contented, you have an anticipation of a glorious inheritance. We were praying concerning a touch both ways. The Lord condescended to touch a leper, a poor defiled man, excommunicated by his malignant disease. "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. I am a poor sinner. I will, be thou clean." And we looked at the other facet, the dear woman sadly afflicted, indulged by the Lord. She touched Him, so when there was contact virtue flowed from His presence to hers. This is it. My friends, I ask you, does this restore to you the years of trouble and sorrow? The Lord can do it in the twinkling of an eye. (This is a Biblical expression.) He restores to you all and more too. So we have seen in the Lesson how the Lord did it for dear old Israel. What a restoration! And he saw his grandsons. "I had not thought to see thy face: and, lo, God hath showed me also thy seed." He had got a double blessing. The dear old saint must have been under a lot of temptation because Joseph was alive. He was kept in the dark: the Lord did not communicate with him concerning Joseph that he was alive. He was under the shadow of death, but the Lord restored to him the years the locusts had eaten. What I am trying to promulgate is, the divine operative principle can never miscarry, never be reversed because the glory of the Trinity is involved in it. What would He do with His great Name if He did not restore to you the years the locusts had eaten?

I turn to the other remarkable case of two who were allied, near,

one in spirit, and to see how they were in relation to the prospect of restoration - Ruth and Naomi. Ruth, a young widow taught and blessed of God, had nothing but poverty. She was full of faith that the Lord would restore to her the years the locusts had eaten. She was on her way to liberty and peace. I believe according to the revelation of the Book she had a vista of beauty and full, abundant restoration of the years the locust had eaten. She was on her way, and when she reached Bethlehem she was home, supremely happy. We know from her language. "Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace." She was after restoration, and what restoration the Lord gave her! "Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens." My daughter! O the glory of love and happiness, restoration! Presently the handfuls of purpose, the apron filled, and the skirt, and her Boaz, and he was a progenitor of the sacred humanity of the Lord Jesus. What a restoration! Follow it through and you will see she had an expectation of restoration.

It was the opposite with Naomi. When she got back to Bethlehem "all the city was moved about them, and they said, "Is this Naomi?" pleasant. There must have been a profound change in her countenance. "Is this Naomi? can it be that this is Naomi." She made reply, "Call me not Naomi," as if she had no comfortable expectation of restoration, as though she was in the place where Martha was. "Lord, by this time he stinketh." It was too late; restoration could never come to her. "For the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty." Ten years it took. "And I will restore to you " You may say it looks impossible, and it does. "The Lord hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?" You see the contrast between the two. She had no prospect of restoration. Poor heart, are there any here like that, with no comfortable feeling of hope, all swept away? "Call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me." Does the principle operate? Blessed be God, it does. Certainly Ruth was a great comfort to her, but how could she have the years restored? Time went on. Presently according to ^{the} divine appointment of Almighty God, dear Ruth and Boaz had Obed. I wonder what Naomi felt like? She took the child and laid it in her bosom. Did it stop at Obed?

No, she loved him: did her faith see the Babe of Bethlehem? Did she behold "my God, contracted to a span for me"? She took the child and laid it in her bosom and became nurse to it. Did she only see Ruth's son? She saw Ruth and Boaz, and a greater Son, the Lord Jesus. There is a direct line to the sweet Babe of Bethlehem. Don't you think that would restore to you everything if you took the dear, sweet, lovely Babe to your bosom? "And I will restore to you the years that the locusts have eaten." There seemed to be a special revelation to those friends who were very close to her, and they made known what the Lord had shown them. They said to her, and it is a beautiful demonstration, "Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel. And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age." You have got the word, the principle of the resurrection. All that part was past with Naomi when she was so dark. The years were restored to her. "He shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life." What do ^{you} think of that, my friends? "and a nourisher of thine old age." You see the beauty of the last scene. "And I will restore" I felt, how precious! what a restoration! So I speak to you in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, according to ^{the} divine faithfulness of our God He will for you who fear Him 'restore to you the years that the locusts have eaten,' and you must come back and prove it is a true prophecy. It cannot miscarry. It is a wonderful text. Many a poor, burdened, sorrowful child of God has received remarkable confirmation from this. "And I will restore to you," You do not see how: the Lord knows how He will do it.

A brief word on the next verse, a time of blessing for the Church of God, Israel. "And the floors shall be full of wheat." The floor is the Church, and the wheat the increase, a godly increase. And the fats or vats overflow with the glorious truth of the gospel, and oil which is the grace of God. "And ye shall eat in plenty." He was looking forward to the time when 'your sons and your daughters shall prophesy'. He was looking to Pentecost. "And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God." What about the sermon on the day of Pentecost and the three thousand? And when the Holy Spirit comes 'ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord

your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you." "Then they that gladly received his word were baptised." You know the taste of it, you have got a palate for the truth. You know when you eat in plenty, 'immortal meat, the living Bread from Heaven'. "And my people shall never be ashamed." I will offer one or two meditations on the word as to the specific interpretation of it. "My people shall never be ashamed." Shame before God on account of sin, but "My people shall never be ashamed." You will never be ashamed because the Lord has abandoned you, forsaken you, failed to fulfil His promise to you. He will fulfil His promise, He will appear for you, He will restore to you the years the locusts have eaten. "My people shall never be ashamed." The Lord will hear your prayers. If you were hoping, crying, pleading with the Lord and He failed to hear you you would lie down in shame, but "My people shall never be ashamed." The Lord hears and answers. Blessed be God.