NOTES ON THE STRUCTURE OF JONAH (PAGE 1246).

For the Canonical order and place of the Prophets, see Ap. 1, and p. 1206.
For the Chronological order of the Prophets, see Ap. 77.
For the Inter-relation of the Prophetic Books, see Ap. 78.
For the Formulae of prophetic utterance, see Ap. 82.
For References to the Pentateuch by the Prophets, see Ap. 92.
For the Inter-relation of the Minor (or Shorter) Prophets, see pp. 1206-7.

The clue to the date is given in 1:1: which, by comparison with 2 Kings 14.25, falls within the time of Jeroboam II and the earlier years of Uzziah: therefore about 690 B.C. (see Ap. 50, p. 59).

Modern critics are practically unanimous in declaring that the book is a "combination of allegory and myth". But the fact that Jonah the prophet was a historic personage is settled by 2 Kings 14.25. And the fact that the prophecy, with its great miracle, was referred to by Christ as a type of Himself, places the book in as high a position as any other prophecy.

The Century Bible says that "we are not to conclude that the literal validity of the history of Jonah is established by this reference" (note on Matt. 12.40, p. 206). But, apart from the fact that the Lord referred to the Queen of Sheba in the very next sentence, and thus places Jonah on the same level of "literal validity", the question is placed beyond all controversy by the further fact that seven times in John's Gospel the Lord declared that every one of His words that He uttered was given Him to speak by the Father (see below). Those who strike at these words of Christ are striking at God Himself, and are making the whole of Divine Revelation one of note itself. All the petulant and fanciful assumptions used for arguments are swept away with one stroke, and are overwhelmed by this decisive and conclusive fact. Modern critics must now perforce find the answers to their own objections. We need not be at pains to repeat the refutation of their assumption, that, because certain words have not been required or necessitated by the subjects of the earlier Scriptures, therefore such words did not exist before, and are thus evidences of the book's being written at a later period of time. Only a mind already hostile could invent such a proposition, and only those who are ignorant of "the laws of evidence" could make use of it.

The prophecy of Jonah is literal history, and is besides a twofold type.

1. He was a type of the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord: see Matt. 12.40, where the "as" and the "so" are sufficient to show us that a man's being miraculously kept alive for a particular period can be no type of another's being dead and buried for the same period.

As our Lord was raised from the dead at the end of that period (see Ap. 156), so Jonah must have been, as miraculously, raised from the dead.

Jonah's prayer could have been uttered in the last few moments of life. In any case the words of the prayer were not written down till after he had been vomited up alive (Jonah 2.1-10).

2. "As Jonah was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of Man be to this generation" (Luke 11.30).

That generation were as grieving and angry at the faith and repentance of those to whom the resurrection of our Lord was proclaimed, as Jonah was at the repentance of the Ninevites.

Both these types were hidden in the history by the One Who knew the end from the beginning, and are declared to be so by Him of Whom Jehovah said, "I will put My words in His mouth."

Seven times in John's Gospel our Lord testified to the fulfillment of that promise:

"My doctrine (i.e. teaching) is not Mine, but His that sent Me" (7:16).

"As My Father hath taught Me, I speak those things" (8:28).

"Why do ye not believe Me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God" (8:40, 47).

"I have not spoken of (or from) Myself: but the Father which sent Me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak" (12:49).

"The words that I speak unto you I speak not of (i.e. from) Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me" (14:10).

"The word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's Which sent Me" (14:24).

"I have given unto them the words which Thou [the Father] gavest Me" (17:8).

The Century Bible (Jonah; Introduction, p. 200) may say: "It is humiliating for a commentator to collect doubtful stories of sailors swallowed by sharks and vomited out alive." There is truth in this. But if we recognize the fact that the word "alive" includes the thought of resurrection, then we have ample evidence that this is conveyed and taught by the "as" and "so" in Matt. 12.40. In any case we have to remember the words of Jehovah in Deut. 18.18, 19: "I will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him. And it shall come to pass, whosoever will not hearken to My words which He shall speak in My name, I will require it of him." We leave the question with these solemn words: "I will require it of him."

The notes will show us Jonah, not as a wayward, thoughtless child, but as a "man of God", willing to sacrifice himself (mistakenly, of course) in order to save his nation. He knew that Assyria at that time was in great difficulties. There is a silence of eighteen years in Assyrian history at that time, and the surrounding nations were beginning to assert themselves. Jonah had just been commissioned to encourage Israel to a restored position (2 Kings 14.25, 26). He must have known also that Nineveh (Assyria) was to be Jehovah's rod of judgment for Israel. He knew the well-known character of Jehovah, and feared that if he made Jehovah's proclamation Nineveh might repent, and her overthrow be averted. See Jehovah's words (4.2).

If, however, for the sake of his nation, he did not make the proclamation at all, Nineveh might be overthrown and Israel saved. He was mistaken, and had to be corrected (ch. 4. 1-11).

The great lesson of the book is—"Jehovah's care for children and cattle" &c., but that the devices of man shall not frustrate His purpose, and that what He hath said shall surely come to pass.

That is the lesson which gives to the book a dignity and importance which is worthy of it, and of its place in the Word of God.
JONAH.

1. 1 the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, 

2. Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before Me.

3. But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.

4. But the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken.

5. Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep.

6. So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not."

3 rose up to flee. Jonah knew that Assyria was to be God's sword of judgment against Israel. If Nineveh perished, Israel might be saved. God's mercy might arrest this overthrow of Nineveh. Was this why Jonah would sacrifice himself to save his nation? This would explain his flight here, and his displeasure, as clearly stated in 4. 1-2. When he said (v. 12), "Take me up", &c., he had counted the cost. He confesses to the men (vs. 8, 10), but not to God. He gave his life to save his People. The type of Christ may have begun here. See Gal. 3: 13; and cp. Rom. 9: 1-3.

5. Sacrifice and Vows of Mariners. 

4. The Tempest.

3. 4-15. Jonah's Punishment. 

1. 4-18 (A. above). JONAH'S PUNISHMENT. 

(Alternation and Intrusion.)

3. Sacrifice and Vows of Mariners.


C | C | 2.8, 9. Sacrifice and Vow.


A | D | 4. The Tempest.

H | H | 6. Prayer of Mariners.


E | E | 5. Sacrifice of Mariners.

O | O | 10. Sacrifice.

F | F | 11. Danger.


1. 7.

And they said each one to his fellow, "Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us."

b1 So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon 1 Jonah.

b2 And he said unto him, "Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil is upon us; What is thine occupation? and whence comest thou? what is thy country? and of what people art thou?"

b3 And he said unto them, "I am an Hebrew; and I fear 1 the LORD, 1 the God of heaven, Which hath made the sea and the dry land."

a3 Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, "Why hast thou done this?" For the men knew that he fled from the presence of 1 the LORD, because he had told them. Then said they unto him, "What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us?" for the sea was wrought, and was tempestuous.

b3 And he said unto them, "Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for 3 I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you."

D G

13 Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring it to the land; but they could not:

P for the sea was wrought, and was tempestuous against them.

E H

14 Wherefore they 2 cried unto 1 the LORD, and said, "We becast Thee, O 1 LORD, we becast Thee, let us not perish for this 1 man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for 2 thou, O 1 LORD, hast done 3 as it pleased Thee."

J 15 So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging.

B 16 Then the men feared 1 the LORD exceedingly, and 0 offered a sacrifice unto 1 the LORD, and made vows.

C 17 Now 1 the LORD had 0 prepared a great fish to swallow up 1 Jonah. And 1 Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

A K

2 Then Jonah prayed unto 0 the LORD his God out of the fish's belly. 2 And said, "I 0 cried by reason of mine affliction unto 1 the LORD, and He 0 heard me; out of the belly of 0 hell 0 cried I, and Thou hast heard my voice."

L o

1 Then = And. See note on v. 10. the LORD. Heb. Jehovah. Ap. 4. I. belly = bowels. Cp. 1. 17. Note the Fig. Enervatis (Ap. 6), as shown by the Alternation in v. 2.

v2 | e I cried, &c. Jonah's affliction.
| f And He heard Jonah's request.
| f' And Thou heardest.

2 cried = cried out. Not the same word as in next clause, or in 1.5; but the same as in 1.2, 5, 14. heard = answered. Heb. 'amah. Not the same word as in the next clause. hell. Heb. Shem. Ap. 56. Cp. Ps. 18. 5; 116. 3. cried = cried for help in distress. Not the same word as in preceding clause, or in 1.2, 5, 14. heardest = gavest heed to. Heb. 'amah'. Not the same word as in preceding clause.

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3 For Thou hast cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all Thy billows and Thy waves passed over me.

4 Then said I, I am cast out of Thy sight; yet I will look again toward Thy holy temple.

5 The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the深度 closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head.

6 I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever:

7 But I will sacrifice unto Thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that I have vowed. Salvation is 'of the Lord.'

8 And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, saying,

9 "Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.

10 So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey.

11 And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown."

12 So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.

13 And, &c. Jonah's rapid thoughts and words before he died were subsequently written down by him; for all the verbs are in the past tense, not the present. Cp. v. 4, "didst bring," &c. See notes on p. 1247.

14 the Lord. See note on 1. 1. the Lord. Heb. Jehovah. Ap. 4. II. 2 that great city. Cp. 1. 1, 2; 4. 11. Diodorus Siculus (cent. 1 a. c.), ii. 8, and Herodotus (cent. 4 a. c.), v. 58, both say it was about sixty miles in circuit and about twenty miles across. We must remember that such cities included large areas for cultivation and pasture. Cp. "much cattle," 4. 11. "preach = proclaim. Heb. proclam. to cry aloud; as in Prov. 4, 5, 8; Is. 2, 4, 14. three days, &c. i.e. in circuit. See note above. 4 a = one. cried. See note on "preach," v. 2.

3. 4-4. 11 [For Structures see next page].

4 forty. The number of probation. See Ap. 10. believed. Heb. 'iman. Ap. 69. III. God. Heb. Elohim. Ap. 4. I. proclaimed a fast. Professor Rawlinson has shown that just at this time Nineveh was in a time of trouble, and Assyrian history was "shrouded in darkness for forty years" (Ancient Monarchies, vol. ii. pp. 579, 580). Hope was given to all the neighbouring countries which were asserting their independence. This explains the readiness of Nineveh to hearken and obey, as was done on another occasion when the prophets of Nineveh declared it needful (see Professor Sayce, The Higher Criticism and the Monuments, pp. 489, 490); by the Persians in a national trouble; in Greece, a fast which included cattle (Herodotus, i. 24); and by Alexander the Great (Plutarch, Perip. § 83, 54). This decline of Nineveh gave hope to Israel: which hope had been encouraged by the prophet Jonah himself (2 Kings 14. 25-27). This may have been the reason for Jonah's not wishing to avert the overthrow (v. 4) of Nineveh, by giving it the opportunity to repent and thus secure Jehovah's favour (Joel 2. 14). See notes on p. 1247. We thus have veritable history, and not allegory.
And he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.

k

And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, 'Let neither man nor beast, neither flock nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water:

8 But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands.

9 Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from His fierce anger, that we perish not?'

10 And 5 God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and 5 God repented of the evil, that He had said that He would do unto them; and He did it not.

But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry.

And he prayed unto the Lord, and said, "I pray thee, O Lord, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish; for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest Thee of the evil.

Then therefore, O Lord, take, I beseech Thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live."

Then said the Lord, "Doest thou well to be angry?"

So Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shadow, till he might see what would become of the city.

And the Lord 9 God prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief.

So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd.

But 9 God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered.

And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that 9 God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted.

And wished in himself to die, and said, "It is better for me to die than to live."

And 9 God said to Jonah, "Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd?"

And he said, "So I do well to be angry, even unto death."

Then said the Lord, "Shall I have any respect for a 9 gourd?"

Four. 1-11 (M$, above). CORRECTION OF JONAH. (Interventions and Alternations.)

But it displeased 7 worm. Put by Fig. Symbodochae (of the Part), Ap. 6, for a blight of such; as in Deut. 28, 39. They were appointed during the night, and came at sunrise.


Supply "I do well [it is right]".
pity on the ‘gourd, for which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which ‘came up in a night, and ‘perished in a night:

11 And ‘should not 3 spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein ‘are more than sixscore thousand persons ‘that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also “much cattle?”

innocent ones in the city these are naturally included. Thus the book suddenly ends; and we are left with the solemn reflection that, Nineveh being spared, the way was thus open for the execution of Jehovah’s judgment on Israel by the sword of Assyria, which took place in due time.

MICAH.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK AS A WHOLE.

(Alternation.)

1. 1. THE TITLE.

Ε | 1. 2—3. 12. THREATENING.

Β | 4. 1—5. 15. CONSOLATION.

Α | 6. 1—7. 10. THREATENING.

Β | 7. 11—20. CONSOLATION.

For the Canonical order and place of the Prophets, see Ap. 1, and p. 1206-7.
For the Chronological order of the Prophets, see Ap. 77.
For the Inter-relation of the Prophetic Books, see Ap. 78.
For the Formula of Prophetic Utterance, see Ap. 82.
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For the Inter-relation of the Minor (or Shorter) Prophets, see p. 1206.

The Prophecy of Micah is dated as being given “in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah”.

Micah begins, apparently, a year or two before the end of Jotham’s reign. Isaiah, in that case, had already been prophesying some seventeen or eighteen years.

By comparing 4. 10 with Isaiah 89. 6, we have another case of similar words occurring in two different prophets; and some, having concluded that one prophet copied from another, have built upon this, certain theories as to dates, &c. But no valid argument can be based on such coincidences: for the simple reason that we are not dealing with the words of the Prophets, but with the words which God spake by them (Heb. 1. 1, &c.). Surely God may speak the same message, even in identical words, by two, three, or more of His prophets. If the need were the same, why should not the words be the same? 1

In this case, the period covered by Micah and Isaiah was almost exactly the same (op. Mic. 1. 1 with Isa. 1. 1; and see Ap. 77). It is no wonder that the circumstances did call for similar utterances, constituting a confirmation of the Word of Jehovah “by the mouth of two or three witnesses”. Both were independent, without any idea of copying one from the other, as is alleged by the writer in The Encyclopaedia Britannica, eleventh (Cambridge) edition, 1910-1911, vol. xvii, p. 567, who says: “it is impossible that much, if any, of these chapters (Mic. 4-7) can be ascribed to Micah himself”. This is said in face of the fact that Jeremiah (26. 14-19) definitely quotes and refers to Micah.

Having regard to Mic. 1. 1, we see he must have been a contemporary of Isaiah for nine and twenty, or thirty years (Isaiah continuing for another seventeen or eighteen years if he died in the Manassean persecution. See Ap. 59, p. 68, and Ap. 77). We may thus date Micah as from 632 to 605 B.C.

1 In connection with this we may well compare other passages as follows:

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