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ARTICLE IV.

THE PROPHET JONAH.

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I. THE PROPHETS GENERALLY.

THE prophets were men to whom God communicated a knowledge of future events, long before the causes of them had begun to develop themselves, so as to make them discernible by human sagacity. This is usually regarded as the highest kind of inspiration; and the existence of such knowledge among men is often appealed to in the Bible as proof unanswerable, that those who possessed it must have been in direct communication with the Divine mind.

"I am the LORD, that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images. Behold the former things are come to pass [i. e. the former predictions are fulfilled], and new things do I declare; BEFORE THEY SPRING FORTH I TELL YOU OF THEM [i. e. before they begin to *germinate*, so that human sagacity can offer a conjecture, God makes them known]." Isaiah 42: 8, 9.

Cicero has a fine passage in the commencement of his treatise *De Divinatione*, affirming the actual existence of such a power in the human race, at some periods of its history, and distinctly referring the first and most effective exercise of it to that region in which the men of the Bible had their origin, namely, the great plain of the upper Tigris and Euphrates, the country of the Assyrians and the Chaldeans, and the father-land of the Hebrew race which, at length, became the only medium through which God communicated his will to men. It was to this region that the king of Moab, when the Hebrews were marching to Palestine under Moses, sent for a prophet of high character and great reputation, to counteract the Divine power which made Moab afraid. Num. xxii.

Though Balaam was a bad man, he was yet really a prophet, and, in his prophetic ecstasies, said just what God directed him to say. Num. 23: 7, 8, 12, 26. 24: 13 etc.

"It is an ancient opinion," says Cicero, "derived from the heroic ages, and confirmed by the consent of the Roman people and of all nations, that there exists among men a power of divination which the Greeks call *μαντινη*, that is, a presentiment and knowledge of

future events. A magnificent and salutary thing, if indeed it exists, and one by which our mortal nature makes the nearest approach to the Divine power." . . .

"Indeed, I know of no nation, however cultivated and learned, or however savage and barbarous, which has not supposed that future events can be signified, and by some understood and foretold. At first the Assyrians, that I may fetch authority from the most distant, by reason of the levelness and magnitude of the region which they inhabited, saw the heavens on every side open and manifest to them, and observed the shootings and motions of the stars; which being noted, they handed down what might be signified to each one. In this nation the Chaldeans, so called, not from their art but as a national denomination, supposed that, by a constant observation of the stars, a science might be so found that it could be predicted what would happen to each one, and with what fate each one was born."¹

The idea of Cicero, that the gift of divination, or the spirit of prophecy, had its first and most perfect manifestation among the nations whom the Greeks and Romans rather loosely denominated Assyrians, is founded in truth; for there, in the ancient world, did God especially make himself known. Abraham, the progenitor of the Hebrew nation, was a Chaldean; in the Scriptures he is called Abraham the Hebrew, the first who bears that national name; and his native city is affirmed to have been Ur of the Chaldees. The same sacred records inform us that the garden of Eden, the very cradle of the human race, the place which God made the dwelling of the first pair, from whom all mankind are descended, was on the head waters of the Tigris and Euphrates.

So certainly as counterfeit coins are proof that genuine coins exist, so certainly do these classical and oriental traditions of a power of divination among men, which had its origin and most effective exercise in the ancient Assyrian race, on the great plains of the Tigris and Euphrates to the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, afford proof that God did there communicate the gift of prophecy, as our sacred books declare.

Noah and Enoch were prophets; so were Abraham and Moses; and, from the earliest times to the days of Malachi, there was an unbroken succession of inspired men in the Hebrew race, most, if not all of whom, had, besides the power of foretelling future events, the gift of working miracles in attestation of their claims to supernatural authority.

¹ Ciceronis Opera, Ed. Bipont. XI. 174, 5.

Some of the predictions of Moses were exceedingly circumstantial and minute, and they have been most exactly fulfilled; and, in the early historical books after Moses, there is frequent mention made of prophets, and of their labors and predictions and exhortations among the people. As early as the time of Samuel, if not earlier, the prophets formed a profession by themselves, as distinct as the priesthood or the military, and schools were established in which several hundreds dwelt together under the instructions of some distinguished leader. They were from all the tribes, and from all ranks and occupations; they were the authors of the civilization, the literature, and the music of the Hebrews; they were the teachers, the reformers, the historians of their people. Most of the historical books were written by them, and they composed many works of this kind which were not included in the sacred canon, and which time has therefore destroyed. Such were the books of Nathan the prophet, and Gad the seer, and others. 1 Chron. 29: 29.

II. THE OLDEST PROPHETIC BOOK IN THE BIBLE.

The earliest prophets wrote no books distinctively prophetic, which have come down to us, and we have no record of their predictions except what is found in the histories. According to the most generally received calculation, the most ancient prophet, who has given a prophetic book of his own to the Biblical canon, is Jonah. The book is but a fragment, and mostly occupied with what befel Jonah in the execution of a special mission from God to the city of Nineveh; and we have a brief notice, in one of the historical books, of another prediction by the same prophet. 2 Kings 14: 25. For several reasons, this singular and most ancient prophetic book is worthy of special notice. We shall take for granted the correctness of the unanimous verdict of both Jewish and Christian antiquity, that the book was written by Jonah, whose name it bears; and shall endeavor to give such information respecting it and its author as may vindicate its claims to the place which it has always held among the books of the Bible.

III. AGE OF THE PROPHET JONAH.

According to the Jewish Rabbins, Jonah was the son of the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings xvii.), whom the prophet Elijah restored to life, after he had expired and been carried by the prophet into the

little upper chamber where he was himself wont to lodge. This would place his birth about the year 900 B. C. This dream of the Jews, however, rests on no historical foundation; and it is more probable that the birth of Jonah ought to be placed about a century later. If so, he was a child when the poet Homer was an old blind bard singing his rhapsodies in the cities of Asia Minor, as the prophet afterwards sang his in the great city of Nineveh. He was a contemporary of the Spartan lawgiver Lycurgus; he lived a century before Romulus laid the foundation of what has since been called the eternal city, and four centuries before Herodotus, the father of profane history, who also was an Asiatic. We mention these circumstances that we may bear it in mind, while contemplating the singular incidents in the life of Jonah, that he lived in a simple and rude, and what we should call, semi-barbarous age.

IV. REPUTATION OF THE BOOK OF JONAH.

This ancient book of the rude old prophet has been, during many generations, a favorite theme for the ridicule of the jesting unbeliever. The grinning pagan Lucian had his joke in regard to it; and Augustine, speaking of it in his day, says: *Hoc enim genus quæstionis multo cackinno a paganis graviter irritum animadverti.*¹ Even serious Christians of our own time, are generally rather shy of the story of Jonah, and are inclined to think that it is one of those things of which the less said the better.

Is there any real ground for this shyness of the believer and this ridicule of the unbeliever?

A careful attention to the subject, a little accurate knowledge of the age, the country, the persons and the circumstances about which the narrative is employed, will show, we think, very clearly, that this ridicule and shyness are all misplaced. The preservation of Jonah's life by a fish, and the rapid growth and as rapid destruction of the vine which sheltered him from the heat of the sun, are regarded and treated, in the Scriptures, as events purely miraculous, and as such, they contain no difficulty, unless it can be shown that the miracles are in themselves inappropriate and puerile, or wrought for an unworthy purpose. On these points we must form our judgment, not by the perversions and misrepresentations of scoffers, but by the character of the age and the circumstances of the narrative.

It is certain that the men of ancient times, and living in the Bible

¹ Scholz, Einleit. in heil. Schrift, III. 574. Augustin, Epist. CII.

lands, who were best qualified to judge, never had a thought that the narrative is in any respect ridiculous. The uninspired Jewish writers, both before and after Christ, speak of it in the most respectful terms. The apocryphal book of Tobit, which purports to be the narrative of a Jewish resident of Nineveh, written some two or three centuries before Christ, speaks of the certainty of the eventual fulfilment of Jonah's prediction respecting that city; Josephus, the Jewish historian, a writer of the highest respectability, gives the narrative of Jonah as an important matter of fact in the Hebrew history; and the Talmudic writers refer to Jonah as a type of the Messiah, and in this representation they accord entirely with the declarations of Christ himself as given in the New Testament.¹

V. TESTIMONY OF CHRIST.

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who, to say the least of him, was one of the wisest and best and gravest of teachers, and whose knowledge of the Old Testament was certainly never exceeded by that of any human being, alludes several times, in his recorded discourses, to the narrative of Jonah, and always in a tone of the highest respect, both for the prophet and his history. Indeed, he makes himself directly responsible for those very parts of the narrative which have been most subjected to ridicule; he makes the most solemn use of them as illustrative of the most affecting and triumphant period of his own earthly existence, his burial and resurrection, and evidently without the least consciousness or suspicion that he was saying anything which any sober mind could regard as in the slightest degree ridiculous. Compare the following passages:

"And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. For as Jonas was a sign unto the Nivevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation." Luke 11: 29, 30.

"Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said to them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly: so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold a greater than Jonas is here." Matt. 12: 38—41.

¹ Tobit 14: 4, 8. Sept. Josephus, Antiq. IX. 10. 2. Eisenmenger, entdoektes Judenthum, II. 724 ff.

In the passage quoted from Matthew, our Saviour makes himself directly responsible for that which is generally regarded and treated as the most improbable and ridiculous part of Jonah's narrative. On matters which pertain to the Old Testament history and the truths of revealed religion, it is our opinion that the authority of Christ is of greater weight than that of the most learned sceptic or the wittiest scoffer.

VI. ORIENTAL AND CLASSICAL TRADITIONS ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE NARRATIVE OF JONAH.

Moreover, both oriental and classical antiquity have many parallels to the history of Jonah, and fruitful traditions, in the very region where these facts are alleged to have occurred, of facts of the same kind. According to the classic tales, the eastern shores of the Mediterranean sea were once infested by huge man-devouring sea-monsters, who were often the terror and sometimes the ruin of the sea-shore settlements.

To begin with the most modern of these traditions, the legend of St. George and the dragon, the scene of which is laid at the seaport Beirut, on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean, north of the ancient Sidon. George was a prince of Cappadocia, converted to Christianity about the middle of the third century, and, after a life of the most self-denying and arduous labor in the cause of Christ, was put to death with cruel torture during the persecution by Diocletian.¹ Aia, the daughter of the king of Beirut, for the salvation of her country was about to be devoured by a frightful dragon. St. George, in full armor, assaulted the dragon, and after an obstinate conflict of several days' continuance, slew him and delivered the princess. Afterwards he became the patron saint of Armenia, of England, and especially of the Crusaders, of the Franconian and Suabian knights, and of the devotees to chivalry generally.

This, as I have remarked, is one of the most modern of the traditions of this sort; and, as we ascend higher in antiquity, we shall find

¹ This is the church tradition respecting St. George. The account given of the saint by Gibbon, in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (Chap. XXIII.), is indeed a very different one. But Gibbon states that his St. George was put to death in the autumn of the year 361 by a mob in Alexandria; while the St. George of the church suffered martyrdom by the order of the Roman emperor in the spring of the year 303. Is there any probability that these two narratives can refer to the same person? There is more than a half century's difference in time, besides diversities of incident even greater.

still closer resemblances to the story of Jonah. This is very observable in one of the mythic stories respecting Hercules, which Clemens Alexandrinus and other church fathers expressly affirm to be derived from the Bible narrative. It is as follows :

Further north than Beirût, at Troy, near the eastern shore of that arm of the Mediterranean which was anciently called the Aegean sea, according to classic tradition, Neptune in anger sent out a devouring sea-monster, which committed fearful ravages with every returning tide. There was no remedy but that king Laomedon should give up his beautiful daughter Hesione to be devoured. While the monster with expanded jaws was approaching her, chained to the rocks, the hero Hercules, sword in hand, leaped into his throat, and for three days and three nights maintained a tremendous conflict in the creature's maw, cutting away valiantly at his vitals, till at length the monster expired, and the hero emerged unharmed, with only the loss of his hair, which, by the heat of the animal, had been made to fall from his head. It was for this exploit that Hercules received the epithet *Τριτόμηρος*.¹

According to the classical and Phenician tradition, in still earlier times, Neptune sent a devouring sea-monster to ravage the coast in the neighborhood of Joppa, the very part from which Jonah sailed when he would flee to Tarshish. There was no remedy but to expose Andromeda, the daughter of king Cepheus, to be devoured. As she stood chained to the rocks, awaiting her fate, Perseus, who was returning through the air from his expedition against the Gorgons, captivated by her beauty, turned the monster into a rock by showing him Medusa's head, and then liberated and married Andromeda. Jerome informs us that the very rock, outside of the port of Joppa, to which Andromeda had been chained, was in his day still pointed out to travellers as an object of curiosity.²

These traditions illustrate and corroborate the narrative of Jonah, inasmuch as they attest the existence, in ancient times, of man-devouring sea-monsters in the Mediterranean sea, and of human conflicts with them. Traditions generally have some historical basis on which they rest, from which they spring; and the general analogy of both oriental and classical tradition shows that the story of Jonah does not stand alone, that it is supported by human authority as well as by the Divine testimony.

As Nineveh, however, was the theatre of the most celebrated act

¹ Bochart, Hierozoic, III. 688, 9. Leipsic edition.

² Hieron. in Jon. 1: 3. Winer, Real-Lex. 496.

of Jonah's ministry, it might reasonably be expected that traditions arising from his story would there be the most clearly and distinctly marked. In this expectation we are not disappointed. From time immemorial, the region around the ancient site of Nineveh has been fruitful in traditions of Jonah; there his tomb has always been shown, and the recent discoveries of Mr. Layard and others have brought monuments to light which bear striking resemblances to the Bible narrative.¹ The Assyrians were of the same race with the Hebrews, and the language of Nineveh so closely resembles the Hebrew, that any one who is acquainted with the latter, can easily, so soon as he has learned the arrow-head alphabet of that ancient city, understand the inscriptions on its so recently discovered monuments.

Among its sculptures there is one of very frequent occurrence on monuments of every variety of size, on massive pillars and on the small medallions or cylinders which were worn upon the person for ornaments, as watch-seals are worn in modern times. One of these cylinders, recently brought from Nineveh, we have examined. It is about the bulk of a medium sized watch-seal. The figure is that of a man in a fish. The sculpture is very fine and characteristic; the fish in form resembles somewhat the salmon, except the mouth, which is more like that of the pike; the head and face of a dignified and noble looking man are seen just below the mouth, the hands and arms project from the pectoral fins, and the feet and ankles from the ventral. There are various other forms of the group, but all having this general character. The Ninevite history, except what is preserved in these monuments, is almost entirely lost. We have but little of it in the Bible, and still less in the classic writers. But for the explanation of this sculpture we have ample materials in the traditions of the neighboring and cognate city of Babylon.

According to the Babylonian tradition this fish-god or fish-man is Oannes, who was divinely sent to that country to teach the inhabitants the fear of God and good morals, to instruct them in astronomy and agriculture, in the sciences and the useful arts, and in legislation and civil polity. He came from the sea, and spake with a man's voice. He taught only in the daytime, and every evening returned again to the sea; but always ready to bless them again on the succeeding morning with a fresh impartation of his wisdom.

The description given by Berosus, who was himself a Babylonian priest, about the year 830 B. C., is this: The body of Oannes was like that of a fish; under the head of the fish was the head of a man,

¹ Rosenmüller, *Alterthumskunde*, II. 2. 92. Layard, II. 352.

and added to its tail were the feet of a woman. His voice was human, and he spake an articulate language. During the day he instructed the Chaldeans in letters, and in all arts and sciences, taught them to build temples; and at night he returned again to the sea.¹

It is a general principle, that all mythological narratives have a historical basis in some fact of actual occurrence. The very definition of a myth proceeds on this supposition.

Is it reasonable to suppose, is it conceivable even, that all these mythological traditions should originate in that one region of country without any historical foundation? Certainly a tradition so remarkable, so wide-spread, found in so many different languages and races, and in such a variety of forms, cannot be an exception to the general rule, cannot reasonably be regarded as the creature of mere accident.

Is not the historical basis found in the existence, from the most ancient times, of the dreaded man-eating monsters in the Mediterranean — in incidents of actual occurrence in connection with them — and especially in the old narrative of what befel the Hebrew prophet, when he attempted to evade the execution of his commission against the Ninevites?

Can the historical origin of these myths be found anywhere else? Viewing the narrative as the Bible presents it to us, simply as a miraculous transaction, occurring in a remote, simple and rude age, among a community who gained their livelihood from the sea as merchants, fishermen and sailors, is there anything in the story inappropriate or undignified, improbable or ridiculous? We have already clearly seen that none of the ancients, none of the inhabitants of that region, regarded it in any such light.

We do not say that St. George, or Hercules, or Perseus are Jonah, or that even the name Oannes is derived from that of the prophet (though this certainly seems not at all improbable²); but what we affirm is simply this, that events not dissimilar to the narrative of Jonah were the great staple from which was derived much of the traditionary lore of that region in which the scene of Jonah's adventures is laid, and therefore his story could not there have been regarded as ridiculous or improbable.

This view is further confirmed by the manner in which the subject

¹ Layard, II. 466.

² We have a derivation precisely like this in the common name of the river Euphrates. It is formed from the oriental name with the article prefixed, *וַחַרְרִי*, by simply adding the Greek termination *της*.

is treated in the Koran. There the prophet is referred to with the highest respect, and one entire chapter of the book is inscribed with his name. In one passage he is called *Dhu'lnun*, that is, *the dweller in the fish*; and in the thirty-seventh chapter the following narrative is given of him: "Jonah was one of our ambassadors. When he fled in the fully laden ship, the sailors cast lots, and by that he was condemned; and then the fish swallowed him, because he merited punishment. . . . We cast him upon the naked shore, and he felt himself sick; and therefore we caused a vine to grow over him, and sent him to a hundred thousand men, or more; and when they believed, we granted them their lives for a definite time." In the twenty-first chapter it is said: "Remember *Dhu'lnun* (*the dweller in the fish*, that is, *Jonah*), how he departed from us in wrath and believed that we could exercise no power over him. And in the darkness he prayed to us in these words: 'There is no God but thee. Honor and glory be to thee. Truly I have been a sinner, but thou art merciful beyond all the power of language to express.' And we heard him, and delivered him from his distress; as we are always accustomed to deliver the believers." This brief prayer, which the Koran represents Jonah as uttering in the belly of the fish, the Mohammedans regard as one of the holiest and most efficacious of all prayers, and they often use it in their own devotions. Certainly it is simple, expressive and beautiful, and reminds us of the prayer of the publican in the Gospel. The tenth chapter of the Koran says: "It is only the people of Jonah, whom we, after they had believed, did deliver from the punishment of shame in this world, and granted them the enjoyment of their goods for a certain time."

The Mohammedan writers say, that the ship, in which Jonah had embarked, stood still in the sea and would not be moved. The seamen, therefore, cast lots, and the lot falling upon Jonah, he cried out, *I am the fugitive*, and threw himself into the water. The fish swallowed him. The time he remained in the fish is differently stated by them as three, seven, twenty, or forty days; but when he was thrown upon the land he was in a state of great suffering and distress, his body having become like that of a new-born infant. When he went to Nineveh, the inhabitants at first treated him harshly, so that he was obliged to flee, after he had declared that the city should be destroyed within three days, or, as some say, forty. As the time approached, a black cloud, shooting forth fire and smoke, rolled itself directly over the city; and put the inhabitants into dreadful consternation, so that they proclaimed a fast and repented, and God spared

them. The time of his sea voyage the Mohammedan writers generally place between his first and second visit to Nineveh.¹

From these various oriental traditions, it is very plain, that the men of the old East, the men of the country where Jonah lived, and who were acquainted with the manners and modes of thought there prevalent, never felt any of those objections to the prophet's narrative, which have so much stumbled the men of other nations and other times. God deals with men just as their peculiar circumstances and habits of thought require; and the sailors and fishermen of Palestine, three thousand years ago, are not to be judged of by the standard of culture at the present day; and a mode of treatment might have been very suitable for them, which would be quite inappropriate to modern fashionable society; and they, we doubt not, in the sight of God, were of quite as much importance in their time as we are in ours.

VII. THE FISH BY WHICH JONAH'S LIFE WAS SAVED.

The ridicule to which the book has been exposed, is founded mainly on the two verses here cited.

"Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights." "And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land." 1: 17. 2: 10.

The whole transaction here is plainly represented to be a miracle, produced by the direct agency of the Almighty; and in that view there is nothing in it impossible or incredible. The occasion, the preservation of the life of a disobedient prophet, in a way to administer rebuke and punishment, and the warning of a guilty city containing a million of inhabitants, so as to produce repentance and reformation; such an occasion was certainly not unworthy of a miraculous interposition.

In the Divine economy, however, there is never a profusion of miracles, nor any more of miraculous agency than is absolutely necessary to accomplish the purpose intended. It is, therefore, entirely proper, and may be very useful, to inquire how much of miraculous agency was absolutely necessary here, and how much might have been the result of natural causes merely.

Neither the Hebrew text nor the Greek of the New Testament determine the kind of fish which was employed by God to save the

¹ Sale's Koran, I. 405. II. 125, 243.

prophet's life. All that the Bible affirms, is, that it was a marine animal of large size. If, then, it be true that no whale ever visited the Mediterranean, or that the largest whale has not a throat of sufficient capacity to swallow the smallest man, this would not prove the Bible narrative untrue, nor imply any necessity on the part of God, of creating a new animal for this particular exigency.

The Mediterranean formerly abounded in a species of *carcharias* or dog-fish, specimens of which are still found there, though in less numbers. It is an animal of the shark kind, and though smaller than the whale, its throat and maw are sufficiently capacious to lodge without crowding a man of the largest size. We have the explicit testimony of credible writers, that in more than one instance, a fish of this kind has been taken in the Mediterranean, in whose stomach was found entire the body of a soldier dressed in complete armor. Such instances are alleged to have occurred off the harbor of Marseilles in France and Nice in Italy.¹ Even in modern times there have been caught, in the Mediterranean, fish of this species, which were from twenty-five to thirty feet in length, nine feet in circumference, and of two tons weight. A half ton, or one thousand pounds, is a common size.

In an edition of the *System of Nature* of Linneus, by the philosopher Müller, the following story is given of a frigate which was cruising in the Mediterranean in the year 1758. In a heavy storm a seaman fell overboard, and was immediately received into the jaws and throat of a sea-dog or *carcharias*, which was following the ship. Before the animal sank, an officer on deck discharged a gun at its head, and the charge taking effect it caused the animal to disgorge its prey, and the sailor was rescued alive and uninjured, and lived for several years to repeat the story of his deliverance. By harpoons and cables this fish was captured, and his exact weight was 3924 pounds.²

Without doubt, it was a fish of this kind which God employed for the prophet. The only miracle necessary was the preservation of the prophet's life during his imprisonment; for the gastric juice will not act on the living fibre; and any one of a variety of natural causes might have been sufficient to effect the release on the third day. Surely the simple preservation of a man's life for a few hours, without light or air, is no such stupendous miracle that it should seem incredible. It even appears quite small compared with the ascent of Elijah or the resurrection of Lazarus. But in case of a direct interposition of the Almighty, what is small or great, difficult or easy?

¹ Bochart, *Hierozoic*. III. 688. Leipsic ed. ² Eichhorn, *Einleit*. IV. 340, 341.

What is the difference between the budding of a rose and the bursting of a volcano? Are they not all alike to Omnipotence?

But why did God adopt this method? Why did he not choose some other way? Such questions may always be asked in respect to God's works, and they seldom admit of an answer; and it is of little consequence whether they are answered or not. God has his own ways of accomplishing his own purposes, and never deems it necessary to ask our advice, or seek the benefit of our wisdom. Why did God choose the method which he has chosen, for the reproduction of life and living beings in this world? Why not adopt some less complex, some more convenient mode? Why do the inhabitants of the air and the water generally produce eggs, and the inhabitants of the ground a living progeny? And why should there be such strange exceptions to this general rule? The flying squirrel, itself almost a bird and an inhabitant of the air, gives birth to living young, while the clumsy land-tortoise, the most unlike a bird possible, and living mainly on land, produces eggs. Can any one tell why?

Why has God given the elephant a trunk instead of a neck? Why must some shellfish cast their shells in order to grow, while with others the shell grows with the growth of the body? Why should some animals have bones instead of shells, and others shells in the place of bones? Or in other words, why should some animals have their bones buried in their flesh, and others carry their bones on the outside of their flesh? Can any one tell? Why do some animals have teeth without claws? others both teeth and claws? and others again neither?

The God of nature is quite as unsearchable in his ways as the God of the Bible is in his; and does his work by as great and apparently as capricious a variety of methods. If any one can tell us why the God of nature accomplishes the same end by such a variety of means, then we can tell him why the God of the Bible chose to save his prophet by a living creature, which had been born spontaneously in the course of nature, rather than by a sailing vessel built by the hands of men. God, both as exhibited in nature and in the Bible, even seems to love variety for variety's sake, and many times to put forth creative energy in the strangest forms, for the very purpose of showing his creatures what he can do, and by what a variety of means he can accomplish his designs.

But there is generally a discoverable propriety, an appropriateness, in God's adaptation of means to ends, both in nature and revelation. When properly understood these adaptations appear neither capri-

cious nor grotesque. As to the story of Jonah — in a simple and rude age, in a community of sailors and fishermen, in a country where destructive monsters of the deep had for ages been the terror and often the ruin of the sea-shore settlements, what could be better fitted to impress the people with a fear of the awful power of God, to give them a vivid conception of the tremendous energy of his punitive justice, and the impregnable security of his protective favor, than this very fact which is related of the prophet Jonah, and which has often been turned to ridicule, by irreverence, shallowness, and self-conceit? The most dreaded enemy they knew, that their imagination could conceive, which had from time immemorial been the terror of their fathers, was so restrained and controlled by God as to be made the pliable instrument of gentle punishment and perfect safety to his disobedient prophet.

VIII. POPULAR OBJECTIONS TO THE BOOK OF JONAH.

(1) The alleged attempt of Jonah to *flee from the presence of the Lord*.

It is not to be supposed that the prophet was ignorant of the doctrine of the Divine omnipresence. Long before his day it had been said and sung throughout the Hebrew nation (Ps. 139: 9—12):

“Whither shall I go from thy Spirit: or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.”

Never has the doctrine of the Divine omnipresence been more fully, more clearly, or more beautifully set forth, than in these verses; and it was a doctrine of universal prevalence in the Hebrew nation. It was the peculiar distinction of their God, a distinction which attested his great superiority to the gods of the nations, that He alone was omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, while the gentile gods were limited as to place, knowledge and power.

It was not, then, with any expectation of actually escaping God's omnipresence, that the prophet undertook to flee to Tarshish, but with views and expectations wholly different.

The Almighty and Omnipresent God had, up to that time, revealed himself on only one portion of the earth's surface, and to only the

Shemitish races of men. From the great plain of the Tigris and Euphrates, to the eastern shore of the Mediterranean, around the Arabian gulf to the land of Egypt, within these boundaries had the special manifestations of God at that period been confined. All the rest of the world lay in total spiritual darkness. There was no church, no prophetic spirit, no Divine institution, and there never had been, beyond these boundaries.

Tarshish was the south-western border of Spain, west of the Straits of Gibraltar. The Phenicians traded there for gold and the precious metals, but the inhabitants were without the true religion; and whatever civilization or cultivation they might have possessed, they had neither church nor prophet nor spiritual worship. It was the extreme West of those times, the golden California of the Phenician sea-farers, whither a man might go and be lost to all his former associations and habits, and hide himself away from the restraints and usages of civilized society, among the motley adventurers of that remote and but partially explored country.

Jonah might hope, that by going there, he would get rid at least of his prophetic responsibilities; he could at any rate avoid his dreaded mission to Nineveh, and perhaps exchange the prophetic office for the more profitable and less dangerous one of mining or trading.

In this view his course was not so very strange or peculiar, as to give any aspect of impossibility or even improbability to his story. Not only the men of the times anterior to the Christian dispensation, who were surrounded by the pagan associations of limited and national gods, which might well be supposed to exert a strong influence over their own better views, but Christian men, and men of our own age and country, are often found acting on a like principle. Professing Christians remove to the West, and without going far enough even to cross the Mississippi river, appear to think that they have got beyond the presence of God, act as if they had never had any serious views of religion, abandon all their religious professions, cease from all their religious exercises, and live entirely without God and without hope in the world, as quietly and securely as if they really supposed that God would take no thought of them after they had gone beyond the territorial limits of the churches to which they at first belonged. This is often the result where it had not been originally intended, a yielding to temptation which occurred after the arrival in the new home; and not unfrequently men even in New England forsake the homes of their youth and go to the far West for the very purpose of avoiding religious responsibilities and religious restraints,

Not that they are atheists, or that they really think God's presence is not actually in the West as well as in the East; but because they willingly practise a vague, undefined deception on themselves, and live on with an indefinite expectation, that they shall at some future day repent, and again receive God's favor, before they die.

Jonah did nothing more nor worse than this; indeed, his impiety and disobedience did not reach near so far; for he sought only to avoid the performance of a very dangerous and exceedingly difficult public duty; without any wish to be released from his personal obligations to God as an individual. He did not wish to be a prophet while that office exposed him to the hazard of becoming a martyr; but, so far as appears, he was willing to be or do anything else which God might appoint him to be or do.

Under great excitement and anxiety, and with most severe mental conflict, he had fled his weary and anxious way to Joppa, and having found a ship which was bound on the most distant voyage then known, he paid the passage-money in advance, and hoping for a long voyage, during which he might hear nothing from home, nor encounter reproach for his gross dereliction of duty, he sought out the most secret and quiet lodging place on board the ship, and worn out with fatigue and watching, he fell into a deep sleep, from which it required a direct effort to awaken him.

In all this there is nothing unnatural or strange or of unusual occurrence. There are too many parallels, there is too much of exactly the same thing, at the present day.

(2) The character and conduct of Jonah generally, and his conversations with God in respect to the Ninevites, are matters of objection to the credibility of the book.

The prophet unquestionably had faults, but his failings have been greatly exaggerated by rationalistic interpreters, who, for the purpose of bringing him into discredit and of excluding his narrative from the number of the sacred books, have reproached him as one of the most disagreeable and hateful of men. So far from this, he was remarkably frank and open-hearted, abundantly ready to confess his faults and take upon himself the consequences of them. This is strikingly manifest in his conduct on board the ship, the readiness with which he confessed his sins, the willingness with which he took the entire consequences of them upon himself, and the very favorable impression which he evidently made upon the rough pagan seamen. *Jonah* 1: 9—14.

His temperament was strongly hypochondriac, he was inclined to

take unfavorable views, and felt deeply and bitterly where other men would scarcely be moved; but he was quite as severe on himself, as he ever was on others.

To understand his feelings in regard to Nineveh, we must call to mind the circumstances in which he lived. He was a native of Gath-hepher, in the northern part of Israel, where the people had been greatly corrupted by constant intercourse with idolatry; and they were continually exposed to the cruelty and oppression of their northern and eastern neighbors, especially from the powerful empire of Nineveh, by which they had been greatly injured.

Among the prophetic utterances of Moses, God had declared in respect to his people (Deut. 32: 21): "*I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.*" This they understood to imply that the time would come when the Israelites would be rejected for their sins, and some pagan nation received to favor instead of them; and this is the use which the Apostle Paul makes of the text in Rom. 10: 19. Jonah had seen enough of the sins of the Israelites to know that they deserved rejection; and the favor which God showed to the Ninevites, on their repentance, might have led him to fear that the event so long before predicted by Moses, was now about to occur, and that too by his instrumentality. Israel would be rejected, and the proud, oppressive, hateful Nineveh, odious to the Israelites for a thousand cruelties (2 Kings 15: 19, 20), might then be received, on their repentance and reformation, as the people of God. It was to him a thought insupportably painful, and God had made him unwillingly the means of bringing this about. He thought he did well to be angry — to be displeased, grieved, distressed — for such is the import of the original phrase in Jonah 4: 1, 9.

Alone, unprotected, at the hazard of his life, and most reluctantly, he had, on his credit as a prophet, made a solemn declaration of the Divine purpose in regard to that city, and God was now about to falsify it. Why should he not be distressed, the poor hypochondriac, and pray to die rather than live? Every body is against him; everything goes against him; God himself exposes him to disgrace and disregards his feelings. So he feels; so every hypochondriac would feel in like circumstances. He cannot bear to remain an hour in the hated city, he retires to the neighboring field, exposed to the dreadful burning of the sun, which is so intolerable that the inhabitants of the cities on the Tigris find it necessary, at the present day, to construct apartments under ground to protect themselves from the noon-

day heat. God causes a spacious, umbrageous plant to spread its broad leaves over the booth and afford him the needed shelter. He rejoices in its shade; but before the second day has dawned, the shade is gone; the sirocco of the desert beats upon him with the next noon-day sun, he is distracted with pains in his head, he faints with the insupportable heat, and alone, disconsolate, unfriended, thinking that every body despises him and scorns him as a lying prophet, hypochondriac-like, he again wishes himself dead. Prophetic inspiration changed no man's natural temperament or character. The prophets, just like other men, had to struggle with their natural infirmities and disabilities, with only such Divine aid as is within the reach of all religious men. The whole representation in regard to Jonah is in perfect keeping; it is as true to nature as any scene in *Shakspeare*, and represents hypochondria as graphically as *Othello* represents jealousy or *Lear* madness.

Jonah is not peculiarly wicked, but peculiarly uncomfortable, and to none so much so as to himself; and his kind and forgiving God does not hastily condemn him, but pities and expostulates, and by the most significant of illustrations justifies his forbearance towards the repentent Nineveh.

The prophets, in the execution of their arduous mission, often came to places in which they felt as if it would be better for them to die rather than live.

For example, of *Elijah*, who was of a very different temperament from *Jonah*, far more cheerful and self-relying, we have the following narrative (1 Kings 19: 4—10):

"But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper-tree: and he requested for himself that he might die: and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers. And as he lay and slept under a juniper-tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. And he looked, and behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruise of water at his head: and he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for thee. And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb, the mount of God. And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, *Elijah*? And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: for the children of *Israel* have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away."

(3) Many other objections to the book of Jonah are met by recurring to one idea, which is often lost sight of, but constantly needed in the interpretation of the Old Testament, and that is, that the existence and power of the God of the Hebrews, was acknowledged and feared among all the surrounding nations. They believed in their own gods, but they believed in the Hebrew God also; and many of the Hebrews, while they paid exclusive worship to Jehovah, believed also in the existence and agency of the surrounding pagan gods. Of the first there is a remarkable instance recorded in 1 Kings 20: 23—26:

“And the servants of the king of Syria said unto him, Their gods are gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they. And do this thing, Take the kings away every man out of his place, and put captains in their rooms: And number thee an army, like the army that thou hast lost, horse for horse, and chariot for chariot: and we will fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they. And he hearkened unto their voice, and did so. And it came to pass at the return of the year, that Ben-hadad numbered the Syrians, and went up to Aphek, to fight against Israel.”

Of the second there is an example equally striking in 2 Kings 16: 10—15.

“And king Ahas went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, and saw an altar that was at Damascus: and king Ahas sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar, and the pattern of it, according to all the workmanship thereof. And Urijah the priest built an altar according to all that king Ahas had sent from Damascus: so Urijah the priest made it against king Ahas came from Damascus. And when the king was come from Damascus, the king saw the altar: and the king approached to the altar, and offered thereon. And he burnt his burnt-offering and his meat-offering, and poured his drink-offering, and sprinkled the blood of his peace-offering upon the altar. And he brought also the brasen altar, which was before the Lord, from the forefront of the house, from between the altar and the house of the Lord, and put it on the north side of the altar. And king Ahas commanded Urijah the priest, saying, Upon the great altar burn the morning burnt-offering, and the evening meat-offering, and the king's burnt-sacrifice, and his meat-offering, with the burnt-offering of all the people of the land, and their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings; and sprinkle upon it all the blood of the burnt-offering, and all the blood of the sacrifice: and the brasen altar shall be for me to inquire by. Thus did Urijah the priest, according to all that king Ahas commanded.”

Ahas would offer his sacrifices to the Syrian gods, because he thought they were stronger in war than the God of Israel (2 Chron. 21: 28):

“For he sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, which smote him: and he said, Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me.”

Still he would keep the brazen altar of Jehovah *to inquire by*, because after all, he had the impression that the God of Israel knew more than the gods of Syria. In the view of a polytheist such illusions are neither strange nor inconsistent.

Among the Shemitish nations especially, there was, with all the diversity of gods, quite a community of religious sentiment. When the prophet Elisha was once on a visit to Damascus, the capital of Syria, an incident occurred which gives a graphic illustration of this fact. It is thus recorded in 2 Kings 8: 7—10:

“And Elisha came to Damascus: and Ben-hadad the king of Syria was sick; and it was told him, saying, The man of God is come hither. And the king said unto Hazael, Take a present in thy hand, and go, meet the man of God, and inquire of the Lord by him, saying, Shall I recover of this disease? So Hazael went to meet him, and took a present with him, even of every good thing of Damascus, forty camels’ burden, and came and stood before him, and said, Thy son Ben-hadad king of Syria hath sent me to thee, saying, Shall I recover of this disease? And Elisha said unto him, Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit, the Lord hath showed me, that he shall surely die.”

We see the same fact exhibited in the conduct of the sailors as represented in Jonah 1: 8—16:

“Then said they 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? And he said unto them, I am an Hebrew: and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land. 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 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 wrought, and was tempestuous. And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you. Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring it to the land; but they could not: for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them. Wherefore they cried unto the Lord, and said, We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man’s life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased thee. So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging. Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the Lord, and made vows.”

A consideration of the real state of the heathen mind, at that time and in that land, will show the utter groundlessness of the objection sometimes made to the credibility of the book of Jonah, because it represents a Hebrew prophet as being sent to a heathen city, and preaching there with great acceptance and power.

(4) The extent and population of Nineveh.

According to the Bible account, the city was not larger in extent than some other oriental cities; in population it was not equal to London and many other cities of our own times; and the statements of the Bible have a most remarkable agreement with the testimony of the ancient classic historians and the recent discoveries of Mr. Layard. The book affirms (Jonah 4: 11) that Nineveh contained more than one hundred and twenty thousand infant children, and on the very largest reasonable calculation this would make the whole number of inhabitants less than a million.

It is also stated that Nineveh *was an exceeding great city of three days' journey* (Jonah 3: 8); that is, having a circumference of sixty miles. Diodorus Siculus says it was one hundred and fifty stadia on the two longest sides, and ninety on the two shortest, making in all four hundred and eighty stadia, which is just sixty miles. Says Mr. Layard: "If we take the four great mounds of Nimroud, Konyunjik, Khorsabad and Kasan as the corners of a square, it will be found that its four sides correspond pretty accurately with the four hundred and eighty stadia or sixty miles of the geographer, which make the three days' journey of the prophet. The agreement of the measurements is remarkable."¹ The statements in the book of Jonah are thus most strikingly corroborated by other unexceptionable testimony, both ancient and modern.

(5) The method of fasting and mourning described in Jonah 3: 7, 8, especially the clothing of the brute animals in sackcloth and compelling them to abstain from food, is by some ignorantly objected to as incredible.

But the statements of the Bible here, as everywhere else, are in exact accordance with oriental customs. Herodotus, when describing the mourning of the Persians for their general Masistius, who was slain at the battle of Plataea, says: "They cut off the hair from themselves, *their horses and their beasts of burden*; and all Boeotia resounded with their cries and lamentations." "Thus the barbarians, *in their manner*, mourned the deceased Masistius." Plutarch, in his account of the same transaction, makes the same statement. Compare also the mourning for Tiberius Caesar, and for Pallas, as poetically described by Virgil:

"Non ulli pastos illis egere diebus
Frigida, Daphni, boves ad flumina; nulla neque amnem
Libavit quadrupes, nec graminis attigit herbam.

¹ Diodorus Siculus, II. 2. Layard, II. 247, 248.

* * * * *

Post bellator equus, positus insignibus, Æthon
It lacrymans, guttisque humectat grandibus ora."¹

(6) An objection is also derived from the story of the plant which shielded Jonah, as related in chapter 4: 6, 7.

This transaction is in the Bible regarded and treated as miraculous, and as such there is surely nothing in it which is either incongruous or incredible. The plant is called in Hebrew יָרֵחַ, and is the same with the *Ricinus communis* or *Palma Christi*. A very good description of it is given by Rosenmüller in his *Alterthumskunde*, IV. pp. 123—125, and also by Dr. Henderson in his *Commentary on Jonah*. The traveller Niebuhr describes, in the following terms, a plant of this kind, which he saw at Basra: "The trunk appeared to me more like leaves than wood, though it is harder than the plant, and bears the so-called Adam's fig. Each branch had one large leaf, with six, seven, or eight angular points. The plant stood by a stream which afforded it an abundant irrigation. It had at the same time blossoms and green and ripe fruits. A few leaves and blossoms which I plucked, wilted in a few minutes, as is generally the case with plants which grow so rapidly."²

The plant is beautiful to the eye, the leaves are very large, and afford a grateful shade. It is frequently cultivated in America, and is here generally called the castor-oil bean.

IX. THE GREAT RELIGIOUS TRUTHS PARTICULARLY ENFORCED AND ILLUSTRATED BY THE BOOK OF JONAH.

The so often despised and ridiculed book of Jonah most vividly sets forth some of the most important truths of religion; truths which in that age were but little known, and which in all ages are much less regarded than their importance deserves. The truths to which we refer are such as the following:

(1) All nations are under the loving care of God and responsible to him.

This great truth, so little known or acknowledged in the Hebrew nation or anywhere else in those times, was joyfully announced, in its application to individuals, by the Apostle Peter, as if it were something new to himself, when he visited the pious Roman centurion.

¹ Herodotus, IX. 24. Plutarch in *Aristid.* XIV. Virgil, *Ecl.* V. 24—26. *Æneid*, Lib. XI. 89, 90.

² Niebuhr, *Beschreib. von Arab.* S. 148.

"Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation, he that feareth him and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." Acts 10: 34, 35.

By one of the oldest Hebrew prophets it had long before been declared in its broadest national acceptation, where God is represented as addressing the Hebrews in the following terms:

"Are ye not as children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith the Lord. Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt? and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir?" Amos 9: 7.

Important as this truth is, honorable as it is to God and beneficial to mankind, it was, in the time of the prophet, known only to a limited extent, and scarcely at all appreciated. Nowhere, in all the compass of literature, sacred or profane, has it ever been more impressively and graphically depicted than in this narrative of Jonah's mission to the pagan city of Nineveh, and the consequences which resulted from it. The close of the book is, in this view, most particularly affecting. Jonah is repining and murmuring for the early destruction of the beautiful plant, which had both gratified the eye and shielded him from the heat of the sun. He is exceedingly uneasy and vexed, and the narrative proceeds:

"And Jehovah said to him: Doest thou well to be vexed on account of the wonder-tree? ¹ And he said: I do well to be vexed, even unto death. Then Jehovah said: Thou art grieved on account of the wonder-tree, with which thou hadst no trouble, which thou didst not raise, which grew, the child of a night, and perished, the child of a night; and may not I have feeling for Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than twelve times ten thousand children who cannot distinguish between their right hand and their left, and also much cattle?"

And here the narrative breaks directly off; not another word is said; there was not another word to be said.

(2) Another most important truth set forth and vividly illustrated by the book of Jonah, is, that irreligious communities are sometimes, and in some respects, less ungodly in their deportment than religious communities; that the people of the world are sometimes, as a body, more susceptible of good impressions, from the preaching of righteousness, than the members of the church.

The Israelites were God's chosen people, and they had all the ordinances and institutions of the true religion. Prophets were born

¹ I have here ventured to adopt the German name of the beautiful plant *ricinus*, it is so much more poetical and descriptive than either the Latin or English.

and dwelt among them; and God was continually sending to them accredited messengers from himself, as He emphatically expresses it, *rising up early and sending*. Yet they refused to listen or to obey or to repent. They continued obstinate and rebellious.

But the moment one foreign prophet appears in the streets of Nineveh, denouncing the judgments of heaven upon the people for their sins, than they at once repent and cry to God for mercy. So it not unfrequently happens. And thus our Saviour declared in respect to the Jewish church in his day:

“The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold, a greater than Jonas is here.” Luke 11: 32.

It is the best things that by perversion become the worst. A fallen angel becomes a devil; a fallen woman sinks lower than a fallen man (for as Jesus, the son of Sirach, truly says: *there is no wickedness like the wickedness of a woman*); and when salt loses its savor it is meaner than common earth; it can neither be tilled nor cultivated, but is fit for nothing but to be trodden under foot of men.

No wickedness is so vile, so hopeless, as the wickedness of those who profess to know God; no men sin so shamelessly, so outrageously, as those who sin with the approbation of their own consciences, and for the sake of doing God service.

Let a man pervert his conscience, let him deceive his own moral sense; and the very light that is in him becomes darkness, and a hopeless darkness it is.

Hence the devil's hardest, most shameless, most villanous work in this world, has generally been done by professors of religion. It is among them that we find St. Bartholemew days and inquisitions and the horrible *auto da fe* and such like.

Again, some men seek to be religious, only because they are mean and pusillanimous. They have all the disposition to be wicked, and would be so if they dared. They long for the pleasures of sin, but they dread its future consequences to themselves. They wish for just religion enough to escape merited punishment when they die; and they desire not one particle more.

From persons of this class, connected with the church, you must expect developments of meanness, and malignity, and double-dealing, and hypocrisy, which you will seldom find among those who make no pretension to religion.

These are the disgrace to the Christian cause, the supporters of

unbelief, the great hinderers of every good work; and there is more hope of the most profligate open sinners than of them.

This idea will help explain the relative religious and moral condition of Israel and Nineveh in the time of our prophet.

(3) A third great religious truth taught by our narrative is this: that sincere repentance and hearty reformation, everywhere and in all circumstances, secure the Divine forgiveness and favor.

This idea occurs repeatedly in the course of the narrative. We see it in what is said of the sailors (1: 5, 13—16); of the prophet himself (1: 19—2: 10); of the Ninevites (3: 5—10); and most especially in the last conversation of God with Jonah (4: 6—11); where it is all placed on the true Gospel foundation that *God is love*.

(4) Another great and most important truth taught by the narrative is, that the ministers of God, in the discharge of their official duties, have nothing to do but just to *preach the preaching which God bids them*, without regard to personal consequences.

Prompt obedience, an obedience full and hearty, to the word of God, is the only way to please God; and, as from God all the increase must come, it is of more importance to please Him than any one else.

It is the only way to gain respect among men; for, however bad men may be themselves, principle and courage they will respect, and double-dealing and pusillanimousness they will despise.

It is the only way to secure efficiency and permanency to the ministry. If the minister yields to public sentiment to the wronging of God, he teaches the church to yield to public sentiment to the wronging of the minister; and ere he is aware of it, the ground has all slipped away from beneath his feet.

There is no deceiving the devil by not encountering him openly; by pretending that you mean him no harm while you are taking measures for his destruction. He is too old a warrior to be misled or thrown off his guard by devices so miserable.

An open field with fair play, courage with humility, decision with mildness, and with all, unruffled good temper, are necessary for the conflicts of the cross.

There must be a martyr's spirit to do a martyr's work; and it is only they who are faithful unto death that have the promise of the crown of life.

How vain the attempt to flee from God or to evade his requirements! Let the timid, the hesitating, the unfaithful, give good heed to the story of Jonah the prophet. They will learn from it that the true minister of the true God, notwithstanding the most strenuous

efforts to escape from disagreeable duty, will after all have the disagreeable duty to do; and it must be done, too, with the additional torment of the reproof of conscience, the fatigue and shame of flight, the mortification of exposure, and the sorrow of repentance. The man who always does right from the first, has, in this world, much the easier task and much the happier life, as well as the brighter crown in eternity.

ARTICLE V.

THE INDIVISIBLE NATURE OF REVELATION.¹

By E. P. Barrows, Jr., Professor at Andover.

NOTHING is more common than the explicit admission of principles, when they are stated abstractly in their naked form, and the implicit denial of the same by the maintenance of opinions which are irreconcilably at variance with them. The principles themselves are, perhaps, apprehended only in a dim and shadowy way, and their logical consequences are not so much as thought of. Hence the necessity of laying down first truths in a clear and definite manner, even though they be generally admitted, and following them out to their legitimate results. In all investigations of a moral nature this is necessary, but especially in the momentous question of Revelation; for here, more than anywhere else, we continually find men contradicting and disowning the necessary inferences from principles which they themselves admit, or, at least, will not venture to deny.

The proposition that Jesus of Nazareth was a Teacher sent from God, few of the present day would care to deny. Yet multitudes are far enough from acknowledging the weighty truths which this proposition wraps up in itself. To exhibit all these in detail does not come within the scope of the present Article, which has for its object to set forth *the indivisible nature of Revelation*. Taking the above-named proposition for our central point, we propose to consider the high and

¹ An Address delivered on the occasion of Professor Barrows's Inauguration as Seminary Professor of Sacred Literature in Andover Theological Seminary.