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## THOUGHTS REGARDING JONAH

DEAR BRO. RUSSELL:—Herewith I send you some suggestions which have occurred to me in studying the Book of Jonah, and which, perhaps, may prove interesting to you.

Your brother in Christ, D. KIHLOGREN.

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The book of Jonah has been especially assailed by the “higher critics,” and they have ridiculed the story of Jonah being swallowed by a fish, as a fable. On the other hand the prophecy of Jonah seems to have been, doctrinally at least, largely a mystery to God’s people. It has, however, valuable practical lessons which no doubt have been appreciated, namely, God’s *love* to the repentant Ninevites; His *kindness* in reproofing the murmuring prophet, and as showing how God sometimes uses very imperfect instruments in carrying out his designs, etc.

Jonah offers a sharp contrast to the other prophets along several lines, viz.:—

1. His character: disobedient, ignoble.
2. His mission: To a *heathen* city.
3. His success: *Unparalleled*.
4. His predictions: *Failed*.

However, Jonah was nevertheless a prophet of God, whose predictions at another time came true. See 2 Kings 14:25. He was from Gath-Hephes, in *Galilee*, tho contradicted by the unscrupulous or else ignorant Pharisees when they wished to gain a point of argument.—John 7:52.

Our Lord applied Jonah’s experiences in connection with the fish as being typical of himself.—Matt. 12:39,40.

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In “Old Theology” Tract No. 41, Jonah 3:10; 4:11 is referred to, as a testimony from this prophet in regard to “the restitution of all things.” In view of these references being given as proof, the

inference evidently is that Nineveh in some way foreshadowed the world in the Millennial age. With this view, I have wondered whether Jonah in his disobedience and fleeing from God might have represented Adam, and hence also our Lord Jesus who took the sinner's place.

Jonah's disobedient course led to the sea where he took ship. Christ's sacrificial course (taking the sinner's place) brought him in contact with the Jewish people.

The Revelator tells us that water is a symbol of "peoples, nations and tongues."—Rev. 17:15.

The agitated waters in Jonah's case find a parallel in the lawless mob, which clamored for Christ's death. The air in motion (wind) which agitated the water may represent Satan, "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2) which then had freedom to work (Luke 23:53). The ship, being at the mercy of the sea, may represent the Roman government, and the crew might represent Pilate; for as the crew prayed to be considered innocent for casting Jonah overboard, so Pilate washed his hands, declaring his innocence, being forced to deliver Christ to death.

If these premises be true, may they not also be applicable to some extent to all the members of Christ's body, who, like Christ, have been accused of being the real sinners, "turning the world upside down," named heretics all through the Gospel age, and one government after another, like the Roman, has been compelled by God's nominal people to exterminate them, to cast them overboard.

Since Jonah in his experience with the fish typified our Lord's death and resurrection "on the third day," may he not also typify the church, the Lord's body, which is to be raised on the third thousand-year-day?—See Z.W.T. 1901, page 122.

If Jonah, then, when cast ashore by the fish, represents *The* Christ resurrected, then the application of the reference in tract No. 41 seem to be quite forceful, as Jonah would then represent the *great* prophet, and Nineveh the world.

Forty days was the length of Nineveh's trial time. The number forty seems to be associated in several instances with a time of trial, for instance, Israel's forty years in the wilderness; Christ's temptation, forty days; the Jewish and Gospel harvests, 40 years each. May it be that Nineveh's forty days of repentance indicate in this way the 1,000 years of the world's trial time?

But did Jonah's predictions *really* fail?

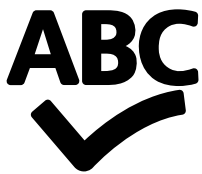
No, the *old*, the *wicked* Nineveh *did* perish. In its place came *repentant* Nineveh. So with the world

in the Millennial age: The *wicked* shall be *destroyed*, but there will be opportunities for all to have the wickedness *cleansed out*, and thus be spared. (See the *double* cleansing process—“*burning*” and “*judgment*,” in Isa. 4:4.)

One thing is sure, and that is that Jonah does not in his murmuring represent *The Christ*. May be the murmuring experiences are only practical lessons, or, may it be that Jonah in this represents a class that *poses* as God’s mouthpieces, but who do not like this “Millennial nonsense” of having Nineveh spared? If so, would the “gourd” which pleased, and which shielded Jonah, be suggestive of the “Confederacy,” the “Image of the Beast,” which will grow up very suddenly and shield the gray heads of the D.D.’s for a short while from the scorching rays of the sun of truth?

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— June 1, 1905 —



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