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An Analytical Treatment
of
The Book of Jonah
Its Historical Significance
and Teaching.

Graduation Thesis
of

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Hebrew Union College

Cincinnati
Ohio

"To My Mother"

My First
Kind Teacher and Friend.

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Chapter I.

Introduction

Since men came to think for themselves their views upon important questions, literary, social and religious have never been found to agree. And no where is this more so, than in the various interpretations put upon the books of the Bible, particularly the Book of Jonah. This especially has given rise to a great variety of opinion as to its date and authorship, its historical nature and significance.

Only twenty-five years ago men were still greatly divid-

ed on these questions. To day the agreement among our Biblical scholars is almost unanimous. It is but natural to expect however, that men cannot completely overcome influences of creed, in which they have been born and nourished, and influences of education and environment.

Thus the Christian will discover allusions to the divinity he worships, on almost every page of the Bible that lends itself to the slightest interpretation in its favor. The fear brought up in the

belief that every word of the Holy Book is to be taken in its literal sense, and that everything contained between its pages is a record of actual occurrence, finds it difficult to see a higher purpose in our narrative than in the exact statement of its words.

(2) The Orthodox Jew sees in the Book of Jonah the actual experience of a prophet who is swallowed up by a whale, and the wholesale conversion of a large and proud capital in a single day and by a total stranger.

164 The devout Christian sees in the whole - which to him is the central part of the whole book - a sure prediction of the death and resurrection of Christ, who came many centuries ^{later} and founded a new world religion.

(c) There is a third view of the book, and that is the one given by the "modern School of Bible Scholars" who do not look at it with the view of satisfying some personal belief, but take the whole narrative in its plain and evident sense. In a word, it is the most rational in-

reputation, and as such it holds the strongest and most acceptable position of the three. It is the view that the average as well as the learned man holds to day.

It will be my task to present in the following pages the latest results of the scholars first as to the date and authorship of the book. Second its historical significance and finally its aim and teaching. Giving also the more conservative and allegorical interpretation as to its meaning, by Cheyne and Kleinert.

I need only add that I lay claim to no original

11.
work. The only merit, I may
claim, if there be any, is the
work of collecting and ar-
ranging these views in a log-
ical and orderly form.

Claiming no more than
this, I offer this work to your
kind and sympathetic con-
sideration. In closing I
must acknowledge the
kind aid afforded me by
the magnificent libraries
of Bro. Philipson and Gos-
man, to whom I am much
indebted and thankful.

Chapter II

The outline of the Book.

The Book of Jonah holds a unique place among the prophetic books of the Bible, differing from the rest in the nature and character of its contents.

In the prophetic books we are given a picture of the times in which the prophets lived and their speeches to Godless Israel to save them from impending ruin. It is the welfare of the people they are interested in, not themselves.

In the Book of Jonah we find the contrary is the case. It deals with a

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prophet himself, his misadventures, his discomfitures, and vexations. In a word with himself, in relation to himself.

The Book may be divided into two scenes - (1) the scene on the sea, (2) and the scene before Nineveh.

A certain Jonah is called upon by God to go to Nineveh and announce its coming destruction, because of its sinfulness. But Jonah seeks to avoid his commission. Instead of going Eastward to Nineveh, he hastens down to Joppa to escape westward to Tarshish. Before the vessel he has boarded, has gone

very far a violent storm overtakes
it, as if to break it in pieces.
Honor and consternation seize
the sailors. Prayers are offered
up by every sailor to his re-
spective God, the masts of the
vessel are cast out into the
water, and Jonah, who has
gone down to the port-hole
of the vessel to sleep, is awak-
ened from his nap chamber
by the Captain, and is called
upon to pray to his God, per-
haps the danger of destruc-
tion would thereby be aver-
ted. But it was all of
no avail. The violent storm
only increased, and death

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Seemed imminent.

While Jonah is praying lots
at the east to find out who
may be the cause of the
evil that has come upon
them. And the lot fell
upon Jonah. Then Jonah
owned up and told the
sailors he is fleeing from
God "the Lord of the Uni-
verse, who made the sea
and the dry land (1. 9).

Now the sailors were
greatly afraid, and asked
Jonah what should be
done unto him, in order
that the sea should become
still again. And Jonah answered

"Cast me into the sea, so shall
the sea become calm again
unto you, for I know that
for thy sake this great tem-
pest is upon you." (11. 12).

But these heathen sailors
were too humane, for such
business. They were not
willing to save their own
lives by sacrificing the
life of another. So they take
to their oars, and strain-
ing every fiber of their
bodies they try to bring
the ship back to land.

All their efforts, however,
prove of no avail, for
the storm only grows

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more and more violent. Then
after some hesitation, and
prayer to God to forgive what
they are about to do, the
sailors reluctantly cast her
into the sea, and at once
the waters become quiet,
and all goes smooth again.

But how far is Jonah
alone in the great deep,
with no hope in sight for
rescue? But Jonah is
not alone. Surely the
Hand of Jehovah, would
not be wanting in
the moment of need,
needed its help most,
when all seems lost.

a large fish appears, and takes up Jonah into its body. Thus Jonah is saved from death, for God desires not the destruction of the life he has created.

Jonah overwhelmed with gratitude for the preservation of his life, gives expression to his emotions by a prayer of thanks owing to his Creator and preserver. Three days and three nights elapse, and Jonah finds himself safe again on Mother Earth.

Now comes his Second Commission to go to Nineveh.

This time he obeys, and, in a
 few days journey, Jonah
 enters the city. We now are
 come to the second scene
 of our narrative - the
 scene before Nineveh.
 Jonah passes through
 the gates of the city, and
 in a loud voice announ-
 ces its doom. "Forty days,
 and Nineveh shall be
 destroyed" (III 4). And now
 we meet with the marvellous
 incident of the whole narra-
 tive, for, no sooner are
 the words of the prophet
 uttered, than the immedi-
 ate conversion of the

whole city follows. Lamentations and wailings fill the air. The King of Nineveh sends forth a decree that no one, be it man or beast, shall taste any food, but be covered with sackcloth and ashes, and cry mightily unto the Lord.

Young and old are immediately decked in sackcloth and ashes, while the King himself has put aside his festive board and purple robe. Proud Nineveh, that but a mom-

but ago was full of glee
and mirth, is now pro-
strate before the mercy of
God.

The denouement has
not yet been reached.
From the great emphasis
given in the narrative
to the fasting and repen-
tance of Minarch, the reader
is made to anticipate what
follows later on. "For what,"
we ask, "would one natural-
ly expect from the great
stress, the author puts upon
Minarch's repentance?"
We answer: "the hope of
forgiveness," "for who can
tell," say the penitent in Rob

starts of Nineveh, "but God
may have mercy and turn
from his fierce anger, so
that we may not perish
after all" (3. 9)

And so it happened. The
prayers of penitent Nineveh
had reached the mercy seat
of God. Their repentance is
accepted, their city saved.

"And God saw their works
that they turned from their
evil way, and God repen-
ted of the evil he said he
would do unto them, and
he did it not" (III. 10).

But there is something
more in store for the

reader. The significant part of the whole book has not yet been reached, and is put off to the final chapter. Here we see Jonah in his whole perverse nature. Nineveh has repented and has been forgiven.

Jonah at once becomes very indignant. He would rather die, he cries out in his anger, because Nineveh has been saved by the grace and mercy of God.

Enraged and burning, Jonah goes to the East Side of City to watch from there

what may become of the city.
It may yet perish, Jonah
hopes.

Right at this point our
author seizes the approp-
riate moment to strike
the climax of the book.
How does he do it?

Jonah, now, is in his
highest passion. The
booth from which he
is watching the city poor-
ly protects his head
from the beating rays
of the sun. Over night
God causes a plant to
spring up over the booth
to shade Jonah the next

day from the scorching sun.
 Joseph now becomes very
 happy over the kind
 plant that shades him.
 But as the plant came into
 existence, so quickly does it
 disappear, and Joseph
 under the burning sun
 that follows after the
 removal of the gourd,
 bewails its loss, and
 wishes he were dead
 like the plant.

And here comes the
 point of the whole book
 & cannot put it more
 forcibly than to the closing
 words of the book itself.

After showing Jacob's anxiety
 for the welfare of the plant,
 the narrative concludes, "Now
 God answered and said:
 Thou hast had pity on
 the gourd, for which thou
 hast not laboured, nor
 made it grow, but which
 came up in a night and
 perished in a night.
 And should I not speak
 of Nineveh, that large
 city in which there
 are more than one
 hundred and twenty
 thousand beings who
 do not know their right
 hand from their left
 and also many cattle?"
 Thus the book abruptly
 ends.

Chapter III.

Is The Book Historical?

For the man who does not find himself hampered by any religious misgivings, and whose mind is wholly free to take a thing for just what it is, and nothing more, for him the Book of Jonah is no mystery, and its meaning Evident.

But to those who look upon it from a fanciful and dogmatic stand point, the question of the authorship, historical truth, and meaning of the book, has given rise to as many interpretations as ingenuity of mind can

create.

The title of the book has been the cause of their whole trouble. It's a small thing, the title of a book, but

"to note it is, to trouble the mind's eye".

The name Jonah occurs elsewhere in the Book of Kings (XIVth) as a prophet who preached in the time of Jeroboam II, the restoration of the lost possessions of his Kingdom.

"Now", reasons the orthodox mind, "because there is recorded in 2 K. 14²⁵, a prophet of the name Jonah, and because the title of

own book is also found, therefore the book must have been written by the prophet of that name in 2 Kings; therefore the book is an account of actual history, and hence their mutual perplexity into which the whole has plunged them, and the embarrassment they put themselves in trying to offer an explanation of the marvellous conversion of Minerva.

The trouble lies in not tasting the book for just what it is; in attempting to make history out of fiction, and dogma out

of drama. The whole matter is simple. Let the book speak for itself.

Let us then look again at the narrative. A cursory examination of the nature of its contents and the tone of expression convinces us at once that the book is not historical fact.

This idea is not new. As far back as in the old Rabbinic days, there existed already misgivings whether the book was a record of actual fact.

We meet in Midrash במדבר XVIII

"doubt of fifty, that is of fifty books, that is the twenty-four books of Holy Scriptures, with eleven of the Twelve (Minor Prophets), excluding the book of Jonah, which is a book by itself, with the six Peters, (of the Mishna) etc. etc."

"Excluding the book of Jonah, which is a book by itself"
 This expression indicate that there existed a doubt in the writers of mind whether the book of Jonah was of equal historical value, as the other prophetic books.

But the book shall speak for itself.

In the first place we note the mechanical relation that exists in this book between the proph. Et and Job. It starts out: "Go, speak unto Nineveh", but Jonah runs away and sets sail for Tarshish in a direction opposite to that he had been commissioned to go.

This is only a prelude to the perversity of the prophetic whole conduct all through the book. He acts like "man", not like "prophet". He is way-

weak, unspiritual-minded,
 deficient in insight. He does
 at last what he is commanded
 to do, but he does it with so
 little perception of a prophet's
 mission that he is disappointed
 with a result at which
 he ought clearly to have re-
 joiced. He is selfish, petulant
 and petty. He flies from
 the commands of God be-
 cause he is afraid, if he
 goes to preach to Nineveh she
 may repent of her evil
 ways, and God will have
 mercy and forgive her in-
 habitants, as he himself
 later on confesses in the

End of the book (IV. 2). :

"Therefore I flee unto
Zanokish for I knew that
thou art a gracious and
merciful God, slow to
anger and of great
kindness and repent-
est thee of the evil".

Jonah does not wish
to be a messenger of
God to the heathen. He
hates Assyria and
would like to 'see the
ripeness of the face of
the Earth'. And after
he has been driven to
Nineveh to announce
its ~~down~~ doom and sees the intense

earnestness of her repentance and her final rescue 'at the hands of the all-wise and gracious God, Jonathan, Chagrinus and Eaten to his heart cries out, "O God take I beseech thee my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." IV. 31.

Other prophets too have felt remorse, but none such as this; other prophets also have inclined to argue with God, but none like Jonathan.

The first prophet, Moses

When he is called upon to
 "Go and speak to Pharaoh" asks
 God "to send another man."
 (Ex. IV 13). Not that Moses
 is unwilling to go, nor
 that he wishes to disobey
 the word of God. On the
 contrary, he would be
 the first to go, but being
 fully conscious of the im-
 portance of the mission, and
 knowing what a poor
 speaker he will make
 before Pharaoh, for his
 people, Moses, feeling
 very anxious for the
 success of the mission
 to Pharaoh, asks God to

such a more competent
man than himself - one
who will be more likely
to persuade the heart-
hardened King to let the
Children of Israel go
from his land.

We see here the re-
fusal is a noble one,
springing as it does from
a modest and meek
soul, the soul of a true
prophet. Moses was
reluctant because he
felt he was unable
to do the work, which
another might be more
capable to accomplish.

It is the same with Jeremiah.
 When his "call" comes, he
 answers "he is but a
 lad", and unequal for
 the important work before
 him; giving expression
 again to that reluctance
 which springs from
 meekness and conscious-
 ness of one's own powers,
 compared to greater power, God,
 the test of a true prophet.

So we may run through
 all the prophets and find
 that wherever they showed
 any reluctance to God's will
 it always sprang from a
 high moral impulse;

from a struggle within to do what their conscience told them to be right.

In the case of Jonah his conduct is not actuated by any high moral impulse. As Driver well expresses it "He has Elisha's despondency (1 Kings 19. 4), without Elisha's excuse".

Nor has he Jeremiah's soul-conflict where the higher impulses, are struggling to vanquish the lower. (Jeremiah XV 10-21).

We see then conclusively that as a prophet, Jonah, unsympathetic-minded, petty and selfish, is unlike

all the other prophets of the Bible. His character as a prophet is not of the genuine stuff. WE see clearly, it is the artificial creation of a man who wrote a book that had an important lesson to teach.

There are many other proofs that show with the greatest conclusiveness the historical improbability of the book. On a casual perusal of its pages one is at once struck with the miraculous nature that runs through it.

all.

And first the rising of
the storm just as Jonah
Enters the ship. its ces-
sation at the right moment,
the instant Jonah is cast
into the sea. The falling
of the lot on just the
right person, and the
presence of the large
fish in the nick of
time to save Jonah;
the residence of Jonah
three days and three
nights in the belly of
the fish without suffo-
cation or death. the spring-
ing up of the gourd over

might to shelter the body from the scorching sun the next day and then its decay, as quickly as it grew up. All, to say the least, place the book in a very suspicious light as to its historical truth.

Yet - this is not all. There is the scene of the marvelous conversion of Minerva.

One morning a cry is heard throughout the city, a cry, the like of which Minerva has never heard before. Not only is the meaning of the cry strange but the language itself. "Forty

Egypt and Minereh shall
 be destroyed" These are
 the words uttered in a
 foreign tongue to a foreign
 people, and wonderful
 to relate, thousands of
 men women and children,
 rich and poor, high and
 low are busy getting
 sackcloth and ashes, and
 in a single day, a merry
 lively city is transformed
 into a tale of woe, for
 the "people of Minereh be-
 lieved God"

Such a sudden and
 complete conversion! A
 heathen people who had

all their lives worshiped
wood and stone, should
as the result of preaching
be converted in a single
day to the worship of one
God, the God of Israel.
To say the least, that
such a complete moral
and religious revolution
should have taken place
without leaving any re-
cord, is incredible.

The Assyrian Mon-
uments tell us much
about the great Events of
its history, but they give
us not one word, not
even as much as a hint

as to the great change of thought and life as is here described in our book.

What they do tell us is that the inhabitants of Nineveh were always idolatrous, worshipping the gods of their own handiwork.

It is unnecessary to add that such a complete conversion of mind and conduct on such a large scale is wholly unparalleled in the records of religious history.

What is still more remarkable than all this, is that the prophets

who have a good deal to say about Min Erch, and give us so much information concerning it. There is not a single allusion to the whole truthness of such an Event as is here described.

On the face of all these facts, one is necessarily led to conclude that the whole affair of the book is unhistorical. And if the reader still should desire a little more, to satisfy his conscience, we might add that in the whole

narrative not even the name of the Assyrian King is mentioned who played such an important part in the conversion of Mithra, nor does it mention the period of his reign or what became of him after his preaching to Mithra.

From all these staring facts we cannot help but conclude that the book does not relate actual history.

This fact is torn out by the whole structure of the narrative which plainly shows that it is

book with a didactic purpose. As Mr. Rivers well says in his Introduction to the Old Testament, "The didactic purpose of the book is the authors chief aim. He introduces just those details that have a bearing upon this." We see clearly that this is the truth from the manner in which the book closes, where the narrative is broken off abruptly, after God shows the ~~treachery~~ treachery of Jacob in the incident of the Gourd. The author, having pointed his moral, has no occasion

to pursue the narrative further.

Convinced that the book is not historical, it does not necessarily follow that it is without some basis of history. All historical coloring it has but just what this tradition is upon which our author builds his didactic story would be folly to conjecture. In fact it is not our purpose to know it. Still it may be interesting to note some of the arguments brought forward in this direction.

There are some who very cur-
iously have traced it to an
old Greek myth - the
myth of "Hercules and Hes-
ione". The story runs as
follows:

Hercules sailing with the
fleet of Argos, was with
the whole crew, cast by
a storm upon the promon-
tory of Pigeum, in Troas.
Here they found a vir-
gin chained to a rock.
She was Hesione the
daughter of King Laomedon,
a grievous wrong Posei-
don the God of the Sea,
had been enraged to -

1. Kalish. Bible Studies. Pt II. P 176-177.
Diodorus Sic. 4⁴². Homer Iliad 20 146 ff.

cause Laomedon did not
 honor him with certain
 promises, sacrifices; and
 for this offense Poseidon
 sent an insatiable mon-
 ster against the land
 which devoured many
 of its inhabitants. The king
 was told that the only way
 Poseidon would be ap-
 peased would be by
 surrendering to the ani-
 mal one of the children
 of his country to be de-
 termined by lot.

The lot as fate would
 have it fell upon the
 King's young daughter.

Hesione. As a result she
was bound to a rock
near the shore to be se-
ized by the sea-monster.

Hercules upon learn-
ing the cause of her sad
fright in indignantly broke
the bonds that fettered
her and set her free.

In return for his most
gracious deed, Hesione
was given Hercules for
his wife.

This whole myth, we see,
bears very little resem-
blance to our story. A
comparison between the
two stories will bring
this out most clearly.
Both agree as far as

the marine monster is concerned. But from here on the comparison ceases. (1) The animal is beneficent in the case of Jonah; while in the Greek fable it destroys indiscriminately all who come within its reach. (2) The God of the Hebrews is worthy because of the wrong doings of a people he loves, and wants to save, although they know him not. The God of the Greeks is worthy because he receives no sacrifice he considers to be due him, and for that reason he would

destroy a whole land. ³⁰ One
 is kind and merciful
 the other is vindictive and
 merciless. The one gives
 the other would take away.
 The one requires no other
 expiation than repentance,
 the other must be sati-
 ated by countless human
 victims and lost but
 far from being least weigh-
 ty, and that is (5) in the
 one the lot falls upon
 the guilty son; in
 the other not on the guilty
 king, but upon his innocent
daughter.

In view of such facts
 we can only say, it is

surprising that these two
 tales should have been
 brought forward as ~~sim-~~
 allels. We know how
 tempting it is to try our
 ingenuity of mind; and
 therefore we can excuse
 it.

There is another version
 given, particularly with
 respect to the whole incident,
 which is still a more in-
 genious interpretation, though
 not, therefore, any truer,
 than the former. I re-
 fer to the explanation given
 by Mr. C. Fumblers.

He argues:

Among the assassins

gods there was a deity called
 Hagan (^{ハタ}), both 'man'
 and 'sea fish', whom the
 inhabitants reverently
 worshipped. Now he
 continues: from the
 fragments of Bejima,
 we learn that this deity
 would, from time to time,
 send messages to
 his people through
 a man who rose out
 of the sea, and in-
 structed the people in
 Agriculture, science,
 and the arts. In later
 times, others came
 out of the sea, with
 fresh instructions for

the Assyrians, and each
 one of these orators or
 legislators marked a new
 epoch of Assyrian life.
 Such beliefs being
 current among the
 Assyrians, we can read-
 ily enough understand
 how the author of the
 book of Jonah would
 avail himself of this
 fact and make his
 preacher at Nineveh
 also to work out of the
 old thus making
 his preaching work
 certain of acceptance,
 and the conversion
 of the inhabitants of

Nineveh more probable."

This explanation is very clever, but we're sorry to find that the text of our narrative will not bear it out. For there is not a single line, or word in the whole book, that contains even as much as a hint of such a belief existing among the Assyrians.

In fact the people of Nineveh appear, in our book, altogether ignorant of the fish experience that Jonah had gone through before he came to Nineveh. (III. 4. 5.). Jonah on entering the City pro-

claims his message: "Forty days etcetera", and the very next verse we read of Ninereck's conversion. So we see Ninereck accepted the suading of Jonah at once, without having the slightest idea whence he came, or of his experience with the whale.

It would be very gratifying to ourselves, as it would be to Mr. Trumbull — if the text had only been a little kinder, and born out his very ingenious explanation.

The only glimmer of light
 that is cast upon our book
 is in regard to the origin
 of its "Name." and that
 is all. The other place
 that we hear of the
 Name of Josiah, is
 found in 2 Kings XVII. 25.
 Aside from the statement
 that he prophesied in
 the reign of Jeroboam II
 the successful restora-
 tion of its former glory,
 we know nothing and
 we love nothing by not
 knowing more, for its
 not to the purpose of our
 book, as we have seen
 our book is not a
 record of actual history.

Our author has simply selected some historical persons as the heroes of his book, and this, in order to give greater emphasis to the lesson he wishes to bring out.

The name of the hero, taken from an historical book, gives our story an historical force and setting. A fictitious name joined to a miraculous narrative would not be so apt to win the reader's attention and receive such serious consideration, as the name of a genuine historical character would do.

So now, we understand
the title of the book which
has been such a stumbling
block to the pious
student of the bible.

Just what may be the
tradition current upon
which our author has
constructed his story
would be idle hazard
to conjecture. Enough
that we know the book
is not a record of
actual history, bearing
the name of an historical
personage as its hero,
and that we know, it
is a book written with
a purpose of teaching

Some great religious
teaching, and in
this last part lies the
whole significance
of the book of Job.

In the next Chap-
ter we shall con-
sider the author-
ship, and date of
its composition.

Chapter IV

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Authorship and Date of the Book

Having seen in the previous Chapter that our book is not a narrative of actual history, we are on the way now to the solution of its authorship and date.

And the solution is not a difficult one, for the internal Evidence and linguistic character of our text serves us here in good stead.

From 2 Kings we know that a certain prophet foretold prophecies in the reign of Joash II.

The time assigned to Jeroboam II reign is 830-782, and if Josh wrote our book it would make him a contemporary of Amos¹ and Hosea², which is entirely out of harmony with the context³ and linguistic structure of our narrative.

1. And first, aside from the fact that not a word is mentioned in the book or any where in the bible, that Josh is the author of our book, aside from this fact, the whole work is written in the third person, that is, a narrative about Josh, not by Josh. And it is not

(1) Amos 1'

(2) Hosea 1'

very likely that a man writing about himself would put himself in such a detestable light as male is represented in this book.

(2) Secondly, Minereh in our book is spoken of as a city of ancient history about which his reader needed information. "Now Minereh" the writer goes on to explain, "was a very large city of three days journey" (III. 3).

Such an explanation would be entirely unnecessary if it was written in the time of Jer.

of oam^I (9th century B.C.), when the city still existed, and the people were perfectly aware that Min^{ereh} was a "large city."

Right in line with this, comes the statement of our text in very clear characters ^{נִינּוּה הִיְתָה}, that is, Min^{ereh} "was"; ~~her~~ existence now, is a matter of the past. And it is but natural that a writer coming many years after Min^{ereh}'s destruction should speak of it in this manner.

(3) Thirdly, exactness of statement is lacking, and exactness of state-

what one would expect from
 an "eye witness". The Assy-
 rian King has no name
 in our story. He is design-
 ated by the expression,
 the "King of Nineveh." On
 the face of it, it indi-
 cates that the name of
 the King was not known
 to the author of our book.
 Else he would certainly
 give it, in place of the
 vague and indefinite ex-
 pression "King of Nine-
 veh". All this is only
 carrying out the truth
 as stated above, that
 Nineveh no longer ex-
 isted in the time of our

writer.

14) Fourthly the narrative itself is dependant in parts upon models. cf.

Jonah III⁴ וַיָּשֻׁבוּ אִישׁ
 Jer. 18¹⁶

מִדְרָכּוֹ הָרָעָה
 דָּדָד

שִׁעְבוּ יָא אִישׁ
 מִדְרָכּוֹ הָרָעָה
 דָּדָד

Jonah III⁹ מִי יוֹדֵעַ Joel II¹⁴

יָשׁוּב וְנָחַם הָאֱלֹהִים
 דָּ

מִי יוֹדֵעַ
 יָשׁוּב וְנָחַם
 דָּ

Jonah IV² Joel 2¹³ כִּי יִדְעָתִי

כִּי אַתָּה אֵל חַנּוּן
 וְרַחוּם אֵרַךְ אֲפִים

וְרַב חֶסֶד וְנָחַם

עַל הָרָעָה

כִּי חַנּוּן וְרַחוּם
 הוּא אֵרַךְ אֲפִים

וְרַב חֶסֶד וְנָחַם

עַל הָרָעָה

A comparison between these passages only convince the reader that the book is of late origin. But that which removes even the slightest vestige of a doubt is found in the style of the composition, which has several Aramaic words and expressions, as:

הַטִּיב (טִיב טוֹב) Jonah 1⁵, 16¹², Jer 16¹³.
 22²⁶, 28; Ezek. 32⁴; Prov. 16³.
 Psalm 37²⁴.

סַפְּחִים Sailors, 1⁵ Ezekiel 27²⁹.

סַפְּחָה Jonah 1⁵

הַתְּעִשָּׂה 1⁶ to him upon. (Heb. 20 7.).
 of עֲשֵׂתָּנָה ψ 146⁴.

ס'ער as a rest. Isaiah 54"
 Habakkuk 3¹⁴ Zach. 7¹⁴.

ψ for שֶׁח 1. 7. 12 4¹⁰

שֶׁח 1¹² to be silent

מִנָּה 2' 4⁶ 7. 8 Daniel, 5. 10. 11

עֶם 3⁷ as in Aramaic & also Ezra 6¹⁴ 7²³ Daniel 3¹²

I am almost tempted to
 add a few more examples
 but I trust I have pro-
 uced enough to show the
 reader that our book
 could only have been

written in a late period

Not alone does the style
of the book point that
way, but also the Psalm
in Chapter II bears out
the conclusions arrived at

We find in this Psalm
imitations of other Psalms
of late origin, cf.

verse 3 with Psalm 18⁴.

and 42⁷; v⁴ with Ψ 3²²,
Lamentations 3⁵⁴; v⁵² Ψ 18⁴
116³ 69¹; v⁶ Ψ 3³; v⁷
 Ψ 142³ 18⁶; v⁸ Ψ 31⁶; .
v⁹ Ψ 50¹⁴ 116¹⁷ 3⁸

Had the Psalm been of
Josh's own time, it would
have been more vigat,
without containing imita-
tions from other Psalms.
Besides it would have
shown a more antique
coloring as Mr. Siver
well prints out.

Thus we have at hand
abundant proof that the
Josh of 2 Kings is not
the author of our
book, but our compo-
sition is of a much later
date as seen from the
linguistic and internal
evidence.

That the book existed

at the End of the third cen-
tury is certain from the
quotations from the Book
of Tobit XIV 4. 8., and
from Ben Sirach, who
speaks of the twelve
Minor Prophets;

καὶ τὰν δώδεκα
πρὸ φητὰν ἐτε

49¹⁰

Taking all things into
consideration, a date
of about the fifth
century B. C. would
be a generous estimate
of the date of our work,
the period after the ex-
ile when the teachings
such as our narrative

contains words have originated breathing with the lofty spirit of a Jeremiah and a second Isaiah.

What now are these teachings? What is the purpose and aim your book which gives it, its high worth, and places it among the books of the prophets? These questions shall be the object of our consideration in the following and final chapter.

Chapter V

76

The Aim and Teaching of the Book.

All modern scholars agree that the book was written with a "didactic purpose," but just what this purpose is, men have differed.

The lessons obtained from this little book, may be many and beautiful lessons they all are. I shall in the following pages mention the most significant ones, and that one which stands out above them all, and is evidently the main purpose and teaching of the book.

One of the teachings that may be drawn from our book, though not the main one, but still worthy of mention, is the idea of "God's omnipresence" that God is in all places of this Universe and no one can escape his will.

This idea is illustrated in the very beginning of our book. God commissions Jonah to go and preach to Nineveh, but Jonah refuses to obey God's voice, and thence by taking ship for

Joshish he can escape
from Got.

So Josh pays his fare,
and goes down to the
side of the vessel to
sleep, believing he is
now safe from Got's
reach. He has but
dozed off, when sudden-
ly he hears some one
at his back, calling:
"Josh, Josh, arise, pray
unto your Got, perhaps
he will rethink himself
on us & we will not
perish."

We can easily picture
the astonishment with
which Josh hears these
words from the Captain.

"What is all the excitement?"
 But before long, a great
 change comes over Jonah.
 The storm has done its
 work! The refractory
 fleeing prophet sud-
 denly becomes penitent
 and meek. He begins
 to realize for the first time
 that God cannot be
 escaped. Jonah has
 been right there all
 along in the prophet's
 flight. He is on the
 sea, as well as on
 the dry land. And
 Jonah in his pen-
 itence suddenly ex-

claims "I fear the Lord,
the God of heaven, which
has made the sea and
the dry land." II. 9.

Thus the storm has worked
the Kaïdépous in Jonah,
and awakens for the
first time to the
fact that the God
of Israel is not
only in one place,
but is in all places,
and in all climes.

Thus in this dramatic
scene our author
drives home a great
religious truth — The
"Ubiquity of God"

But this lesson pales into less importance for the reader, before that other great teaching brought out in the book, that is, "the power of sincere repentance"

The author prepares us for this teaching, by the incident upon the sea. Jorah comes to recognize the fact that he has made a mistake, then he thought he would run away from God. The storm has terrified him. It has subdued him. Self-will and disobedient Jorah now becomes humble

and smiteth. He knows
that the storm will
abate if he is cast into
the sea. Accordingly at
his bidding he is let
down into the turbulent
waters. The rest is known.

Compassered about by
the deep and covered with
its needs, Jonah calls
upon God for help. He
receives it. A whale
takes him up, and Jonah
saves, offers up a prayer
of thanks giving, and
in three days, sees
the light of earth again.

This saving of Jonah
after his repentance
and prayer, is a

significant when for that
 greater daring which
 comes later on in the
 narrative, in that scene
 where the chief lesson
 of the book is to be revealed,
 - the scene before Minereh.

Yek male suddenly
 appears, and proclaims
 the doom of Minereh.

The noble action of the hea-
 then sailors towards her,
 is a premonition of
 how the Minerites will
 act. and our calcu-
 lation has not been mis-
 applied, for when male
 announces his message
 to Minereh, her father.

stantly, we are told, at once
 "believe God," and put
 on sackcloth, and cry
 aloud; and we are told further,
 God heard their cry and
 saved them.

The lesson of the power
 has thus reached its
 most forcible and vivid
 illustration. But we
 have not yet come to
 the climax.

Our author has al-
 ready shown us the (1)
 Power and omnipresence
 of God in the incident of the
 storm. He has also shown
 us the (2) efficacy
 of Repentance, first
 in the case of Jonah,

and secondly (b) in the case
of Ninerech, when destruc-
tion seemed at the door.

Our author has furthermore
shown us the (3) possibility
of noble character in
the heathen, by the
humane conduct of the
heathen sailors towards
Jonah; and also in the
turning of Ninerech from
her evil ways to live
better than before.

All these points are
instructive, yet it is
not these that give the
book of Jonah the high
value it holds among
the prophets. The great

lesson which is our author's main purpose in writing the book is postponed to the last chapter. It stands revealed in the action of Jonah, after he has heard that God has decreed the doom of Nineveh and sowed all her in habitants.

Jonah, now, grows indignant. This is just what I expected, he cries, before I started to run away to Tarshish. I knew it would turn out so. I knew that thou art a gracious God, and full of compassion, slow to anger and rich in mercy,

and repentest thee of the
 Evil" (IV. 2.) I knew if
 these Miners turned
 from their sins they
 would be spared, and
 all my threatening
 would go for nothing.

What is the use of being
 the prophet of such a
 god like this? Therefore
 now, oh, Lord take my
 life from me, for it is better
 for me to die, than
 to live."

Behold now the
 gutters of God, as
 this witer concerns Him!
 To this petulant, petty,
 perverse servant of His

how patient and compassionate is His answer! And the Lord said, "Doesst thou well to be angry?" But Jonah flings himself out of the city, and makes himself a shelter from the heat, and sits down in a gourd to see if God may not be gracious enough - to Jonah - to destroy the heathen City. But the tender care of God follows the prophet to his retreat, and spreads a comforting shade

over him; and while
 this refreshment lasts,
 Jonah's spirit is appea-
 sed and quiet, but
 in a sudden the
 vine that sheltered
 him is taken away,
 and Jonah's faith fails
 with his panting body,
 and asks again that
 God put an end to
 his days. Now comes
 that main teaching
 of the whole book, ex-
 pressed in the last
 three verses. 4⁹ ff.

By Eliciting Jonah's
 sympathy for the dead

plant, it is made the
 means of justifying
 God's tender care for the
 heathen inhabitants of
 Mizereh. Here the point
 of the boat now stands
 revealed — "The Uni-
 versal Love of God"

* He is the God of the
 heathen as well as
 of Israel. His love
 extends over the Mi-
 erites, as well as over
 the Israelites. All
 men are equally God's
 children, and they
 are all equally dear to
 Him. It is not those

alone, who deem themselves
 God's "chosen people," for
 whose welfare he cares,
 but even for the idolat-
 rous who does not know
 Him, He has purposes
 of mercy and love. They,
 too, are this. And in the
 volume with which the
 book closes, the ex-
 clusive spirit of
 unspiritual Israel
 stands condemned.

But this exclu-
 siveness of Israel is not
 altogether unexplainable.
 Israel had always
 been taught that she
 was God's "chosen people."

yet she was made, to
 suffer bitterly from the
 heathen nations. Surely,
 their wrongs would
 be avenged by their divine
 Protector, they hoped.

"Marvellously did
 they maintain their
 courage under all
 adversity, by a purely
 religious devotion, and
 an unequalled religious
 ardour. They loved God
 deeply, and for him
 and for his command-
 ments they were willing
 to suffer and die. But
 mingling with these higher

aspirations, and this pure
 fidelity. They also main-
 tained their courage by
 the unquenchable hope
 - that before long the
 tables would turn, and
 the great day of divine
 justice would dawn.

Yet their hearts were
 pained with the
 endless delay. They be-
 came impatient of
 Heaven's justice. The
 Power of Babylon was
 subverted, only to be
 taken up by Persia,
 and Persia in turn
 by Greece. "When, oh God,

will Israel's Enemies be
 smitten down once
 for God?

Against this yearning
 desire for vengeance
 upon the heathen ~~that~~
 our author has hurled
 his inspired and im-
 perishable protest. God
 * Delighteth not in death.
 He creates not, to destroy.
 The methods he adopts
 to preserve life are
 applicable to the Gen-
 tile as well, as to his
 "chosen people." His
 mercies are over all
 his creatures.

In a word, the author of our book represents God as including within His Paternal Providence the heathen inhabitants of the Earth, with a care hardly less tender and solicitous than that bestowed upon his own people. The God whom our author has learned to love and trust, is not the God of Esther, nor even of Daniel. The writer of this book has in addition caught a glimpse, not only of the divine Compassion, but

also of the, divine jus-
tice, when he concludes
the book by saying,
Jonah, you surely would
not have Minch de-
stroyed, in which
there are one hundred
and twenty thousand
innocent children, and
also so much cattle;
a sentiment only to be
repeated twenty three
hundred years later by
a great English poet:
"He prayeth well who loveth
well,
Both man, and bird and
beast,

He prayeth best who loveth
best.

All men both great, and
small,

For the dear God, who loveth
us,

He made, and loveth
all."

Such is the lofty con-
ception of God by the
author of the Book of Jonah.
I think no higher, purer,
more spiritual conception
is found in any book
of the Bible. Our author
was surely an inspired
Son of God, not in —

aspired to write history,
but to write a story filled
with great and worthy
thoughts of God.

Trivial though this
book may appear in
the number of pages,
and the miraculous
nature of its contents,
it is one of the deepest
and grandest that
ever was written, re-
vealing the loftiest
teaching of Judaism.

Judaism teaches
one God, the sustainer
of all, a God of goodness,
justice, mercy and love.

our author carries on
the thought to its
highest reach:

"If there be one
God, he is the spirit
of life for all man-
kind; if God be good,
he is good every where
and always; if every-
where and always
good, then he is no
less the father of
the heathen than the
father of the Jew."

Thus the author
of our book takes
rank with the second
Isaiah, as a master
builder of Judaism.

and as such he is
rightly placed among
the prophets, and like
them is enrolled among
the world's few immortals.

It may be interesting to
note right here the
"allegorical" interpreta-
tions given to our
book, only showing
to what extent human
ingenuity can be
taxed.

There is the one
presented by Cheyne
and Kline, also
C. H. H. Wright.

According to this view,
Israel is symbolized
as a nation, and
the narrative is an
allegory of Israel's
history. According
to them our author
intended Jonah's
reluctance to accept
God's Commission, to
symbolize Israel's
refusal to take up
its mission as the
"light of the nations."
Israel, as a nation
had been entrusted
with a prophetic
Commission, to be a

witness and upholder
 of Divine truth, but
 as Israel shrank
 from executing this
 commission, and often
 apostatized, it was in
 consequence "swallowed
 up" by the world power
 of Babylon (Jeremiah 51³⁴)
 as Jonah was swallowed
 up by the fish; in
 exile however, like Jonah
 (c II), it sought its God,
 and thus was after-
 wards disgorged un-
 injured (cf. Jer 51⁴⁴), after
 the return from exile.
 There were many who
 were disappointed that

the judgements uttered by the prophets, did not at once take effect, and that the cities of the nations still stood secure, just as Jonah was disappointed that the judgement pronounced against Nineveh had been averted." ¹

Here is another, only a shade more ingenious, and fanciful. It is the Christian interpretation of the fable. In this view the whale incident is made the central point of the whole

1. Driver. Introd. to Lit. of O.T. P 325

Narrative, and the rest subsiding

It takes the story of Jonah and the whale, as referring to the death and resurrection of Christ, the founder of a new world creed - Christianity. For, as Jonah was swallowed up by the fish, so too Christ was laid in the earth, and as Jonah was cast out after three days, so Jesus too arose after three days from the dead; and as Nineveh was converted after Jonah's preaching, so too was the heathen world converted to Christianity after Christ, through a miracle, was restored to life.

St. Luke XI 29. 30. 32. XXIV 6-8.

St. John II 18-22. Matthew XII 38-41.

It is unnecessary to say
 that these allegorical in-
 terpretations were never
 dreamt of by our author
 when he wrote the book.

The whole tenour of the
 book stands out against
 it.

The main object of the
 book, as we have stated,
 is to teach that God is
 not only the God of Israel,
 but of all mankind, and
 his Paternal Providence
 extends over all his crea-
 tures with equal im-
 partiality.

Summary.

To sum up:

The Book of Jonah is a story written with a didactic purpose, to teach the doctrine of God's Universal Love, thereby to offer a divine protest against the narrow exclusiveness of unspiritual Jewry.

With this as its purpose, our author takes an historical personage as the hero of his book, thus investing it with an historical coloring and giving thereby a more serious tone to it all.

Our author is a true artist. The scenes follow one upon another with rapid succession with increasing force up to the close, where the climax is reached, of the whole narrative.

The main scene is laid before the large capital of proud Assyria, who has for many years been Israel's most formidable and troublesome oppressor.

Jonah's prompt and obstinate refusal to go and preach to Nineveh, strikes the key note of Israel's unspiritual attitude she took to the

heathen. It is against this attitude our author directs his immortal protest. His object, in the words of Mr. Kalisch is: "to expose and rebuke Israel's national animosity arising from her pride, which denies to strangers, or at least denies them a share in God's providence; the Hebrew people being represented in the petulant and sullen prophet, and so by stigmatizing a narrow fanaticism."

to exhort his readers to humility and toleration, and thus through his special schooling to educate his people."

The author having pointed his moral in the incident of the gong, has no occasion to pursue the narrative further. Only such facts are introduced that bear a religious significance, and bring out his lofty teaching, thus linking himself with that noble band of compatriots who

110.
pursued the ideal
aim of an intimate
union of all races
with a fervour and
a distinctness which
have made them the
pioneers of the loftiest
form of humanity.

The End.