Jonah - Commentaries by Henry Allan Ironside

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, May 13

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“God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that He had said that He would do unto them; and He did it not” —Jonah 3:10.

THE Book of Jonah has a unique place in the Old Testament. It is primarily the book of the divine sovereignty. The confession of the pagan mariners, “Thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased Thee” (1:14), is emphasized throughout. We are told that “the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea” (vs. 4); “the Lord had prepared a great fish” (vs. 17); “the Lord spake unto the fish” (2:10); “the Lord God prepared a gourd” (4:6); “God prepared a worm” (vs. 7), and “God prepared a vehement east wind” (vs. 8). It is the Sovereign of the Universe who worketh all things according to His own will (Eph. 1:11). This answers every question that foolish, unbelieving skeptics might raise regarding the strange experiences recorded,

God’s love and grace transcend all national boundaries. His heart goes out to all the world. He would have all men repent and come to the knowledge of the truth, that judgment may be averted. He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezek. 18:23). He delights in mercy (Mic. 7:18). Judgment is His strange work (Isa. 28:21). It is a great pity when His servants fail to recognize this and are more concerned about their own ease and reputation than about the needs of men to whom they are commissioned to go as God’s messengers.

Daily Sacrifice, May 17

“But I will sacrifice unto Thee with the voice of thanks giving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord”— Jonah 2:9.

IT took Jonah some time to learn that salvation is of the Lord. If we read this chapter carefully we find him quoting Scripture, but that did not avail to deliver him from the belly of the great sea-monster. He looked in spirit toward Jehovah’s temple, made vows, and offered prayers, but still he remained a prisoner in that dark dungeon; but the moment he turned from self altogether and cried, “Salvation is of the Lord,” Jehovah spoke unto the fish and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land. We too have to learn the same lesson. Self-effort avails nothing: the Lord alone saves the trusting soul.

—Hastings.

Daily Sacrifice, May 16

“But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord”— Jonah 1:3.

THE course of the backslider is always downward. When Jonah, in a spirit of disobedience, rose up to flee from the presence of the Lord, he went down to Joppa; then down into the ship. Verse 5 says he went “down into the sides of the ship;” in 2:6 we read, “I went down to the bottoms of the mountains.” It is only as we walk in fellowship with God that our way is upward. Then indeed we shall prove that the path of the just is as a shining light which shineth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day, ever leading us upward and onward to that city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.

—H. Suso.