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AMERICAN BOARD OF MISSIONS TO THE JEWS, Inc.  
236 West 72nd Street New York 23, N. Y.

# Fifty-fifth Year

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DECEMBER, 1948

No. 3

## THE CHOSEN PEOPLE

"He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep."  
Psalm 121:4.



JOSEPH HOFFMAN COHN, Editor

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JOSEPH HOFFMAN COHN  
Editor

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## Salutation

"We go down to salute the children of the king"—II Kings 10:13

### DEARLY BELOVED FRIENDS:

Parthenogenesis (reproduction without fertilization) is a phenomenon found in certain vegetable forms of life and also among the lowest of insects, worms, etc. One particular cult of unquestioned Satanic origin, headed by a woman, has even blasphemously attributed such a process as the means whereby the Lord Jesus Christ was born of a virgin. And this seductive siren has even dared to claim that this process of virgin birth can be achieved even now among her own cult, if they adhere closely enough to her Satanic system of metaphysics. It is the age-old order that we face, perfectly contained in the first question asked of the human race by the Dragon of old, "Hath God said?" That is, the fleshly mind of this human race of ours seems to prefer to believe anything, no matter how fantastic, except what the Word of God says. Misguided "scholars" start out with the *a priori* which runs something like this, "Did you ever see a miracle? We never did. Therefore, no miracles ever happened!" With such shears they go through the Bible, they snip here and they snip there, until everything miraculous or supernatural has been consigned to the limbo of mythology and fable. They seem to be oblivious to the fact that if their philosophy should be turned upon their own heads, they would find themselves in an embarrassing state. To take a rather trite example, we might say to them, "Well, if you believe that nothing exists except that which you have seen with your own eyes, what about your brains? You never saw your brains, did you? Therefore, you have no brains!" As silly as this, are some of the posits which these modern philosophers set down as guide posts to their agnostic conclusions. Of course they will answer that the existence of brains in their own heads can be proven by the fact that the brain thinks, and that they can witness the process of the thinking, and the putting down on paper of those thoughts. But they refuse to follow the same reasoning with regard to the power of the Christ life in the individual, and the proof of its working in the world day by day.

### WHY THE UNBELIEF?

But now we would like to begin this approach to the study of the virgin birth of our Lord Jesus Christ by asking the question of Acts 26:8, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" We would paraphrase the question, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should bring about the entrance into this world of His only begotten Son by means of a miracle?"

No matter how far afield the philosopher may have gone into his agnosticism, the inescapable truth is that some great power far beyond our ken did create this world. It was some great power, immeasurably beyond our understanding, that tossed the stars and the planets into their places and bade them revolve in their courses. It was again this great power that produced the human species upon this earth. Why then should there be any question if this same God proposes to bring into the world redemption through His Son coming down to earth by means of a virgin, taking on flesh and accomplishing atonement at Calvary's hill?

#### JEWISH NATION A MIRACLE

The Jewish nation got its start only because of a miracle, the nature of which was so closely akin to the way in which our Lord came into the world, that it can just about be classified as a miracle of that rating. The word Isaac means laughter; when the Lord appeared to Abraham, and told him that Sarai was to have a child a year hence, Abraham laughed. Indeed so weak was Abraham's faith that he was quite willing to settle for the divine promise of the redemptive seed, if Ishmael would be counted as fulfilling the promise! Just read the details:

"And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. And I will bless her; yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her. Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee! And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac; and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him." Gen. 17:15-19.

Now if God could project an entire nation on the basis of a miracle where both Sarah and Abraham were so advanced in years that childbirth was out of the question, why should it be thought incredible that He should bring into the world His only begotten Son by means of the virgin Mary?

But of course the difficulty is that the human mind is perverse and desperately defiant of God's will and purpose. This rebellion finds its focus when we come to such a subject as the virgin birth. It is impressive to read God's explanation of the perversity of mankind, in such a passage as 1st Cor. 1:22,23:

"For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness."

It must be understood of course that by the expression, "Christ crucified," the whole of the supernatural existence and accomplishment of the Christ is involved. Christ crucified could not have been possible if it were not for the Christ born of a virgin. The reason is plain enough, and lies on the surface: How could a human being born of man ever take the place of atonement for the world at Calvary? The very nature of the case requires a sinless man, a God-man. But notice how deep is the insight of the Holy Spirit's indictment, that all of the Christology is portrayed as being to the Gentiles foolishness, but to the Jews a stumblingblock. This is remarkable and illuminating, for if one studies the courses of world history he will find this is exactly what has happened through the ages. The Gentiles in general have sought to make a light matter of the whole business. Philosophies of current modernistic trends have minimized the importance of this

fact of God's redemptive program. Some theologians have relegated the matter to "mythologies." They refer to the fact that certain heathen fables speak of their particular gods or goddesses as having come to earth through some miraculous "virgin birth." But, you see, if a born-again Christian believer has been thoroughly established in the Gospel truth, and the power of the Holy Spirit has taken hold of his life, he will find it just a mite easier to grasp the fact that all of the "mythologies" of the virgin birth stories, have stolen their ideas from the original truth of God's Book, and not that God's Book has imitated the pattern of these beclouded savages of other generations.

#### THE JEWS BEWILDERED

On the other hand, our Jewish friends have made out of all this a genuine stumbling block. Instead of dismissing the subject lightly as being of no special account, the way the Gentiles have done, the Jews have taken these matters seriously and have argued them in the synagogues, in the class rooms, in the public forums. That is why we have the question which Paul raised in Acts 26:8, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible"? In other words, Paul was face to face with a thinking and sober-minded synagogue, which took these matters seriously, and discussed them and puzzled over them. We read so many times that Paul went into the synagogue and there *he reasoned* with the Jews. This reasoning he did not do when he went to the Gentiles. Further evidence of this policy is found in the story of the Bereans of whom we are told, "They searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed" (Acts 17:11).

But now let us study a little more closely some of the basic elements that have to do with this blessed fact of our Lord's coming to the world as the seed of the woman. We cannot begin to discuss such a profound subject with any reasonable comprehensiveness, but we do want to touch on the problem found in Isa. 7:14 and to explain that which has confused so many people when they read in Isa. 8:3,4, of the birth of the child Maher-shalal-hash-baz. At least let us note now that this name, is a far, far cry from the name Immanuel of Isa. 7:14. Let us now examine closely the setting of this pivotal passage (Isa. 7:14), and its honest interpretation, that in the Hebrew it is *the* virgin, not *a* virgin, indicating that Mary had been appointed of God from the foundation of the world to fulfill this particular part in God's redemptive program:

#### BORN OF A WOMAN — AS PROMISED

As the fall came from woman, the redemption from the fall was also to come from her. God did not reveal to Eve the time when the Messiah was to come, nor how he should look, nor what He should do and suffer. When Cain was born, Eve exclaimed, "I have gotten a man from the Lord . . .," literally, "A man who is Jehovah," (Genesis 4:1). Eve made a mistake when she believed that the "man who is Jehovah" should be born of her. She did not know that God had determined the birth of Messiah to be far away in the future. When therefore her second son was born, she called him Abel, meaning "vanity," for her hopes concerning her first son had proved vain.

The promise of God to Adam and Eve became clearer when God said to Abraham in Genesis 12:3, "in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed," or as it is the original, "In thee and thy seed all the families of the earth shall bless themselves." The same promise is repeated in Genesis 21:12, "in Isaac shall thy seed be called," that is, the seed promised to Eve shall come



from Isaac and not from Ishmael. Once again the promise is repeated in Genesis 26:4, "and in thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed." Isaac transferred the blessing to Jacob in Genesis 27:27-29 and God confirms the blessing to Jacob in Genesis 28:14. In Genesis 49:10 Jacob transfers the blessing to Judah his son and gives him a time limit in which to expect the Messiah—"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." This verse means that the kingdom of Judah shall last until the Messiah comes.

Tracing the promise still further through the Old Testament, we read in Micah 5:2, 3: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. Therefore will he give them up (let them alone), until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth." The prophet Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah. The One referred to in both these verses is the Messiah, or Jesus of Nazareth, who was born in Bethlehem, of Judah.

Thus it is evident that the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 7:14 only reiterated the promise of old that the Messiah should be born of a woman alone—that is, without a husband, as the word virgin (Heb. *almah*) implies. Then in order to indicate the nature of Him who was to bruise the serpent's head, the prophet says that He shall be called Immanuel, that is, God with us. Isaiah realized, that the Seed born for this purpose was to be God, just as Eve did, when she said at the birth of Cain: "I have gotten a man who is God." This is what the Evangelist John says: "The word was made flesh."

#### AHAZ' UNBELIEF

Now let us return to Ahaz and Isaiah. The prophet tells Ahaz not to fear the two kings who have come up to war against him and the city, the capital of Judah. Ahaz is a descendant of the family of David, of the kingdom of Judah, and needs not to be afraid, for God had promised that the kingdom of Judah should not be destroyed until Messiah come. Ahaz knew the Messiah had not yet come and he should have felt safe. But see him tremble like a leaf in a storm—"And his heart was moved . . . as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind" (Isaiah 7:2).

At first the prophet says to Ahaz, "Ask thee a sign . . ." The king refused, showing that he did not believe God's promise. Then the prophet said, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, the virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." That is to say, although you do not believe, King Ahaz, that God will not suffer the kingdom of Judah to be destroyed until Messiah comes, His promises to Eve, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, shall surely be fulfilled and will be sign enough. You will not ask for a sign, yet God will give it:—the Seed of the woman which shall bruise the serpent's head is to be born of a virgin. This will be the greatest sign the world has ever seen.

In the words which Isaiah addressed to Ahaz, "Ask thee a sign," the word "thee" is singular in number, indicating Ahaz. In v. 12 Ahaz refuses—"I will not ask." Isaiah's next words while spoken to Ahaz are actually addressed to the house of David and the tribe of Judah, for he says, "Hear ye now, O house of David . . . the Lord himself shall give you a sign." "You" in this verse is plural in number. In other words, what the Lord is saying to Ahaz and the house of David through Isaiah the prophet is this: "Fear

not; the two kings shall not take away the throne of David; and here is a sign, for the Messiah shall be born of a virgin as promised of old, and the sceptre shall not be taken away until He comes. He shall let them alone until she who travaileth has brought forth."

#### THE GOD-GIVEN SIGN

Let us now recapitulate briefly what has been said, for we want to make the meaning of Isaiah 7:14 clear enough for any child to understand.

Two kings came up against Jerusalem. Ahaz, the king of Judah, was afraid that the city and the kingdom would be destroyed. So the prophet Isaiah was sent to him with a message from God, "Fear not." But Ahaz would not believe and God offered to give him any sign he might name. The king by refusing to ask a sign of the Lord showed that he did not believe that the kingdom of Judah would last until Messiah came. It was as though the prophet had said, "Do you know that God has promised a Messiah and until He come the kingdom of Judah must stand, because He said, 'The sceptre shall not depart from Judah until Shiloh comes'? Even though the king will not ask for a sign, a sign shall be given, the like of which the world has never known. A virgin — the one of whose seed God had spoken to Eve — shall bear a son who shall be the Messiah." The article "the" (virgin) points back to the prophecy in Genesis 3:15 and 4:1. Isaiah describes the attributes of the Messiah exactly as Eve understood that they would be when she said, "I have gotten a man, the Lord." In Isaiah 7:14 the prophet says that His name shall be called Immanuel (God with us). In other words, God Himself must dwell in the Messiah who is to be born as a man and dwell among us.

#### BUTTER AND HONEY

Then the prophet proceeds: "Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good." The meaning of this is: Although His name shall be Immanuel—God with us—yet He shall grow up as any other child. He shall be fed like all other children of His day with butter and honey. This is exactly the meaning of Hebrews 2:17—"Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren . . . For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." He had to be a man to be able to sympathize with us men, because an angel, being a spirit, could never have fully understood nor sympathized with us.

In the next verse (v. 16), the prophet returns to the subject of the two kings. Through the power of the Holy Spirit he sees the future as the present, for he says, "before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings." The meaning here is, in no more time than it takes a child to be weaned, when it learns to choose between good and bad food, or about three or four years, the land shall be forsaken of both her kings, i.e., they shall both be dead. This was fulfilled. In three or four years Rezin was slain by the king of Assyria (2 Kings 16:9), and Pekah by Hoshea, the son of Elah (2 Kings 15:30).

#### GOD'S PROMISE TO MOSES

Now will you ask, "What kind of a promise to Ahaz was this?—the sign was not fulfilled until more than 700 years after Isaiah spoke to Ahaz. How could that sign give assurance to the Jews at that time?"

To understand this prophecy and the long period of time which elapsed from the day upon which it was given until its fulfillment, we must look at another Old Testament prophecy. When God sent Moses to deliver the children of Israel from Egypt, He told him: "this shall be a sign unto thee . . . When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain" (Exodus 3:12). The sign was not fulfilled until years later. Moses believed what God told him. God's purpose in giving the sign was to convince Moses that His promise of deliverance was unconditional because Israel was destined to serve God upon that mountain.

So it was with Isaiah. The promise was given to those who believed in the previous promise about Christ. As God would fulfill the promise unto the house of David that a virgin should bear a son in the future, so He would also fulfill His other promise relating to the present that the sceptre of Judah should not be destroyed by those two kings. It should stand until Shiloh came.

#### THE FULFILLMENT

That a virgin should conceive and bear a son, without connection with any man, was indeed a marvelous fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah. But even in the case of his forerunner, John, the conception was purposely ordained to be out of the ordinary course of nature, that we might be prepared to recognize the mighty power of God when it should be manifest in the birth and in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. So also, as we have mentioned before in this letter, the case of Isaac, a type and an ancestor of the promised Seed, the birth took place when both parents were aged and Sarah long passed childbearing.

Thus was God pleased, by the prediction and fulfillment of these two miraculous births, to lead us to the consideration of his own sovereign and almighty power over all the laws of nature, by whom they were at first appointed, and are still sustained. Even human philosophy, in the department of geological research, teaches us that a time was when man did not exist upon this globe — when, indeed, it was not adapted for his habitation — and thus calls our attention to a time when the present order of human nature commenced, and when certain individuals of our species could derive their existence from no preceding pair. He, then, who at first instituted the laws of being, shall He not have power over them? He who at first, without the ordinary laws of procreation, constituted man upon the earth, shall He be thought unable or unlikely to supersede them again, in proceeding to the new creation of man, by the incarnation of the eternal Son of God? It was meet and right that He, who came as the Saviour of sinners, should enter the world in such a manner as should not render Him personally obnoxious to the imputation or inheritance of original sin, which is conveyed by ordinary generation.

#### THE LORD OF LIFE

It was to be expected that, if the all-quickenings God condescended to take flesh upon Him, He would disown the necessity of procreation by an earthly father. Why should He seem to derive life from man, who confers it upon all? Truly that explanation of this great mystery which sufficed for the blessed virgin may suffice for us also, as it was addressed to her by the angel: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elizabeth,

she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible."

We have brought these thoughts to you because this is the time which the world, careening at a dizzy speed to the greatest catastrophe of all history, has condescendingly set aside as the season which it calls Christmas. There will be the usual orgies of Christmas trees and tinsel; there will be the shopping and the hectic running hither and thither, till people go mad with the mobs at the markets; there will be parties and lavish spending; the days of the Roman debaucheries will again be re-enacted; anything and everything will be done, except to give honor to Him who came in all humility to bring to the world its only hope of salvation. We must take advantage of such an event at least to bear testimony and to call attention to the simple truths of God's revelation to mankind, so that we may sound once more to the world, the pleading appeal of the Lord Jesus Christ, "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with me." In the limitless stretch of the wideness of the grace of God, He is still knocking, and it is your privilege and mine to open; and if we do, we shall have a guest and a feast unknown in all the pomp and glories of mankind.

We bring to you this message of the moment, and with it the ever-impressive need of Israel's receiving the Gospel at our hands before it is too late. The year is about to close, and your Mission is completing the most brilliant and most blessed year of all of its fifty-four years of history. For the victories won, for the souls of men snatched from the burning, for the hearts of men, women and children made happy because of our ministry, both here and abroad, for all the innumerable blessings that you have privileged us to pass on to a world Jewry, scattered, exiled, driven and hunted like wild beasts of the forests, for all of this you shall share the credit and the rewards, in that great day when the books of record shall be opened and our eyes will bulge as we read the story of things that we never even knew we had accomplished.

#### SHALL WE MAKE IT THE CROWNING YEAR?

Of course it is only natural and human that we shall find a yearning in our hearts that this year shall be the greatest one also in our history financially. It has been, up to the present moment, and if our precious friends will just tug a little harder at the traces, we will be over the hill when December 31st comes around, and we will be able to sing "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," as the books are closed, and we look back upon a year of unprecedented blessings and ministry.

Now for your own season of this Christmas time, may it be truly hallowed; and may there be under your roof the joy and the peace that comes only because the Prince of Peace is the sovereign head of your household, and your guest as you gather about the family table, and give thanks for the blessings of the year that has passed.

Ever faithfully and gratefully yours,

*J. Hoffman Cohen*



## Incidents In The Work

### CONTINENTAL DIARY

Here is a moving account of Andre Frankl's recent missionary tour in Northern Europe. We think of Paul's, "In journeyings often, in perils of waters," as we read these vivid reports of Gospel labors, untiring and unceasing. And you, dear friend, will give thanks to God as you see your dollars and your prayers take wings as your missionaries carry forward the testimony, unabated, undiscouraged, unrelenting. Are you not proud that the Lord has granted you a share in so strategic an end-time testimony? Mr. Frankl labels his letter, "Voyage Report." In French a "voyage" means any kind of a travel trip.

**L**EFTH Paris on June 7 and came back a month later having visited Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, Norway and Belgium. Here are the details:

**Switzerland.** Arrived June 7 in the morning. I went immediately to see Mrs. Spoerri who received me with her usual kindness. I left next day for Zurich and thence to Munich.

**Germany.** Arrived in Munich on June 10. Tried to get in touch at once with the "D. P." Jews. There exist three "D. P." camps around Munich which I visited respectively. I was well supplied with a good quantity of tracts and folders which I lavishly distributed.

I found the inhabitants of these camps very much depressed. They cannot yet see the realization of their dreams of Zionism. Devilish complications in the Holy Land deprive them from a trip which they wish most heartily. Some of them turn their glances towards their heavenly fatherland and have received with great interest our publications and my simple words. A certain number of those Israelites live on black market and the monetary reform which the American Army has decreed has deprived them of a great part of their living. Going through this double disappointment has closed them to the teachings of the Gospel.

I met many Israelites, not only in Munich, but everywhere I went in

Germany, who are of Polish origin and who were in Russia during the war and who are now on their way to France or Germany to start a new life. We will try to do something for them in France.

### ON THE STUTTGART RADIO

I attended, during three days, the International Congress of Youth in Munich where I had interesting conversations with some Christian Jews attending the meetings. I made the acquaintance of the official envoy of Radio Stuttgart, himself a Christian Jew, who offered me the opportunity of speaking through his intermediary on Radio Stuttgart. This radio broadcast was the same evening. I spoke about the American Board of Missions to the Jews, about its founder, the work we are doing, and the regrouping of our Christian Jews. I said, as well, a few words on the Youth Congress and the ardent desire of peace which brought together the youth of Europe in that Congress; and I directed the attention of the listeners towards Peace, a heritage which Christ our Saviour has left as well. And that there is no peace outside God. I was scheduled to preside at the closing service of the Congress in Frankfurt but the American authorities were not able to put at the disposal of the organizers enough trains to convey the participants to Frankfurt; and so that project had to be given up.

### OUR FOOD PARCELS IN FRANKFURT

After having visited a few Christian Jewish families in Nuremberg, I left that town for Frankfurt where I arrived on the morning of June 17, and I got immediately in touch with our friends there. I found them very much worried because of the monetary reforms, but their spiritual situation was satisfactory. The Lord knows how to keep those who belong to Him. Our friends there are full of gratefulness towards Him who inspired our action of sending food parcels, so well done by our Brother Wainer at Oslo. Mrs. Loewy, widow of a missionary, was absent; it was her daughter who kindly received me. I also saw the widow of Rev. Rudnitzki, aged and afflicted with an incurable illness; she lives now at Offenbach near Frankfurt with her eldest daughter.

I visited as well another camp of D. P.'s near Frankfurt in which our Jews were in the same situation as those of Munich. I tried to draw their attention to the only thing which is necessary; but the great majority have no other thought than their desolate material conditions, and the new existence which they hope to start in Palestine. "For the word of God is quick and powerful," and it must be believed that His sowing will bear fruit. The distribution of tracts was interrupted by the Jewish supervisors of the camp who found my activity very much out of place. I got in touch also with Pastor Naber of Frankfurt, of our Baptist denomination, who put me in contact with many of his parishioners of Jewish origin. They are good Christians and fervent members of their congregation.

**Denmark.** On my way to Norway I spent a day in Copenhagen. I saw there Pastor Peterson, president of our Danish denomination, who is

also the general secretary of the mutual aid work which Scandinavians (Danish, Swedish & Norwegian) are carrying out in Poland. Polish authorities turned down my request for a visa. I then tried to get in touch with that work through Rev. Peterson in order to send them our publications. Poland has still a good number of Jewish inhabitants; we must therefore do something there as well. Rev. Peterson is ready to help us.

### WARM SUPPORT IN NORWAY

**Norway.** I arrived in Oslo at the appointed date, June 22. Brother Wainer greeted me very brotherly and we had a long discussion on the work he is carrying out. He had prearranged my programme of sermons and visits. My arrival was duly announced by the newspapers. I could realise the enormous interest which the Norwegians bring to our holy cause. I preached for the first time on Thursday, June 25th, in the church of Pastor Dahl. The hall was full and the message well received.

I left on June, 25th, by air, for Trodheim, a town 500 kilometers north of Oslo. There was a pastoral convention there at which I talked for 45 minutes before 300 pastors and several hundreds of laymen on the Jewish question and on its biblical solution. There is a true Palestinian fever in Norway, at the present moment, and the attachment of these dear Christians to the Jewish people is really admirable. A Norwegian pastor was telling me, "I would like to place my coat under your feet because of the race of my Lord," to which I retorted: "We are all of His race if we are born from His Spirit."

I returned to Oslo on the 26th, where I preached on Sunday evening in the Philadelphia Community. A full hall and much interest. Monday,

June 28th, we made a few visits with Brother Wainer to Jews recently arrived in Oslo, who belong to Wainer's circle. The welcome was warm and we passed blessed moments with those people.

On Tuesday, June 29th, I preached in the church of Pastor Hedin. On Wednesday, June 30th, we visited among the Jews. On Thursday, July 1st, I preached again in the church of Pastor Dahl. On Friday, July 2nd, I attended the burial of the sister of Mr. Ehrling Gustavsen, who is the collaborator of Brother Wainer in the Mission. On Saturday, July 3rd, I preached in the Church of Pastor Martinsen. On Sunday, July 4th, I had the sermon in the morning in the community Salem, and service in the evening at Pastor Dahl's.

As you see, my dear brother, opportunities were not lacking in Norway for me to announce the Good News and be useful to the Master. Brother Wainer had well arranged my sojourn in his country. My gatherings were announced daily by the Oslo newspapers, and so I had the advantage — a blessed advantage — to speak to crowded halls. Financial results of my trip for Wainer's mission are considerable. He will have the means to send several hundreds of food parcels to our brothers who are in Germany. Spiritual results will not be lacking either. The former are surely the consequences of the latter, are they not?

#### NORWAY HAS SENT OVER 1000 PARCELS

Concerning our action on food parcels I can inform you that we have been able to forward more than 1000 parcels, making a total of 3000 kilograms of foodstuffs. This action will be interrupted during the two summer months, but we will resume it in the month of September and our

brother Wainer already has the means of forwarding three sendings of 130 parcels each for our needy brothers. I think we should back his efforts which are a real blessing for both those who give and those who receive.

Belgium. I took the plane at Oslo Monday, July 5th, for Amsterdam. I continued my trip by rail to Brussels. Being informed by Wainer that you were sailing on July 3rd for Europe, I hastened to return to Paris and that is why I did not visit Hirsch Blum at Amsterdam. I arrived on Tuesday, July 6th, at night. I went to see our friends on Wednesday, July 7th, in the morning.

Our friend Wolf has terminated his studies and he is anxiously awaiting your arrival on your decision concerning him. The situation in Brussels is a little confused, but I am sure that with your clear-sightedness you will be able to decide what is most needed.

Miss Hoyt and Miss Somers are on leave. I managed to talk to them before their departure, spending blessed moments in their company. They speak with much kindness and veneration about you. I also spent a few hours with Wolf before leaving.

I hope to give more details verbally and be sincerely recommended to Him who has so much loved us. Yours faithfully, grateful in Jesus Christ.

#### A TENTH ANNIVERSARY

Our brother, Emil D. Gruen, sounds a note of praise and thanksgiving for a decade of service. (From a personal letter to our General Secretary.)

TODAY is the tenth anniversary of my association with the American Board of Missions to the Jews. Ten years ago today I became a member of the staff, as a Field Evangelist, and appropriately enough, my tenth

anniversary finds me out on a field trip.

As I look upon the past ten years I do so with a deep sense of thankfulness to God for the experiences which have been mine. These have not been easy years, there have been periods of great stress, but they have been full years. They have been undergirded by the knowledge of a great task which had to be done, and by the satisfaction of knowing that I had a humble part in the fulfilling of that task.

These have been years rich in fellowship. I thank God for what my association with you has meant to me. The many lessons you have taught me, the warm friendship you have accorded me, all have meant and continue to mean much to me. You have been willing to overlook my weaknesses, the times I have failed, and have been ever ready to encourage and counsel. I know that my usefulness in the Lord's service has been immeasurably increased because of our fellowship in the past ten years.

I also rejoice in the fellowship which has been mine with the other members of the Mission staff. Together we have been on the mountain top and in the valley, and my life has been enriched as we have shared these experiences. Much joy has also come to me in the fellowship which has been mine as I have visited the churches which have opened their doors to me because of my identification with our Mission.

So as I look back upon the ten years now past I have much reason to rejoice, and I pray that the years ahead may continue to be filled with continued fellowship and opportunities for service.

Warmest personal greetings and sincerest thanks for all your kindness.

#### ON THE HILL OF GAREB— INSIDE JERUSALEM

An electrifying inside report from Jerusalem. Mr. and Mrs. E. B. Shelley, devout servants of the Lord, and undaunted lovers of Israel, left the shores of Britain 50 years ago, and embarked on a voyage of destiny which landed them on a hill of Zion, beautiful for situation. There they have dwelt these 50 years, and there they became a part of Jerusalem's commercial and spiritual life. Our friends they have been, and in our behalf they have acted as watchmen on the walls of Zion. Now they tell of the Arab-Jew warfare hot-spot, in which they were the hub about whom rotated one of the dramatic sagas of modern Jerusalem history. This is a piece of exquisite mysticism, which you will read over and over again. We have tried to keep to the original manuscript, even to the obscurities. It was our privilege in Jerusalem to visit with these precious souls of God, now past 85 years of age. Read on, and weep, and also give thanks to God. If here and there you find something which savors of Anti-British, please keep in mind that these saints are loyal British subjects, and speak only the truth as it actually happened, covering nothing, shielding nobody.

TWO voyagers upon the sea of destiny, sailing under sealed orders and under a banner which floated over them, "For I have loved thee with an everlasting love," found themselves pivoted upon Gareb, which is mentioned in Jeremiah 31:39.

After refitting and refueling, they were carried along into other spheres, which are not of particular interest, but they happened to be on the opposite side of Jerusalem, that is, on the east and south side more particularly, and this brought them face to face with the realities clustered round a site which had a sacred history.

Now, upon this site, it is without doubt truthfully recorded, was the



dwelling of Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the High Priest. The Bible tells us very distinctly that there could be no two High Priests, therefore, this was not actually true, but Pilate, in order to insure political power, had allowed Annas to officiate.

#### WHERE JUDAS MET ANNAS—THE FIELD OF BLOOD

The question arising is this: It was within the sealed orders of these two travellers on the sea of destiny that they should find themselves upon a spot which proved to be a sacred haven, recognized permanently as an altar of worship. For instance, the Greek Church has marked in ages gone by, this scene as the site of the dwelling of Annas, to whom Judas Iscariot resorted to bargain for the betrayal of our Lord Jesus Christ in order to profit by the 30 pieces of silver which was the price fixed prophetically, according to Scripture.

On this site there are hidden shrines and also on its surface large pillars indicating that they have been upholders of buildings of considerable proportions. In the immediate neighborhood there is a spot called "Aceldama," which was acquired in the following manner: When the betrayer brought back the 30 pieces of silver, it was said that it was the price of blood money, and it could not be taken, but the purchase of "Aceldama" took place instead. Thus Judas Iscariot went to his own place. Around Annas' private estate, a definite partition wall had been built, making it practically a secret compound, which included a large double-storied building amidst well-grown trees and smaller shrubs. There was also a very sweet little bungalow which became the home of three Canadians who settled there in order to witness the truth of the Gos-

pel to all around. Included in this compound, there was a Russian lady.

#### A STREET CALLED DEIR ABU TOR

Now, it is with this particular spot that we are distinctly associated. The approach from the main Bethlehem road was also in the property comprised under the control of the Greek Church, and it so happened that when the British forces drove off the Turks from Palestine, in 1917, the Patriarch Damianos of revered memory, in thankfulness to God for casting off the Turkish control, donated a very valuable piece of land on the northern slopes directly opposite Jaffa Gate, to Mrs. Tarhasband personally, for welfare work for the benefit of British troops. After a while, a building was erected and later an annex also, in which officers and men could be housed, cared for, instructed and inspired.

The Russian sister had control of a few cottages within this compound, which were at her disposal. The large house which was created as previously mentioned, and the small bungalow of singular beauty and quietness, had also near it a house which was later called Crusaders' House, in memory of the Crusaders' efforts in early Christian periods.

When the Patriarchy donated this property to Mrs. Tarhasband's works, they reserved a strip of land, room enough for the erection of villas, which was to be used for priests who were sickly and for some reason or other not proficient for jobs of high rank.

Into one of these villas, the Shelley family had moved some years ago after their children had left their quarters for Cyprus for the purpose of ministering to British troops. They have been there ever since.

After many years of service in the area donated to Mrs. Tarhasband's

works, the Cupples, who had been in charge of the work, broke down and had to leave for Scotland, where as far as we know, they still are.

#### WHO WILL BUY?

Now, the question was, as the donated property would have to find a new owner (as Mrs. Tarhasband had died), what was to be done with this property and who was to purchase it? It was obvious that the Church of England had no available money, and so also the Church of Scotland. They had their own responsibilities, and what was to be done? There seemed to be no buyers at all for the estimated value of the property, some £15,000, plus £5,000 for the little house in which the Shelleys lived.

Then suddenly — rather hastily — it was disposed of to some wealthy Hebron (Arab) merchants; and they turned the place into a centre for recruiting and training an Arab Force, the import of which we little dreamed of at that time.

However, we had a small garage, and we were asked to donate it as a First Aid Centre, which of course we could not refuse; and it was used for several weeks for training an Arab Brigade, resulting in noisy parades almost continuously every night. In the course of preparation, many wounded men were brought in, wounded by the Jews. Of course it was then known that the whole neighborhood was one fierce battleground, from David's Buildings, exposed to fire from Jaffa Gate and more particularly around the Old Montefiori Quarter, clear over to our own Deir Abu Tor. The only nursing women were volunteers, and the matron from the British Ophthalmic Hospital, alone, had been trained.

#### BEDOUINS TO THE ATTACK

One night, they all disappeared. What had happened? The Jews, in

the early days of settlement of British Power, had obtained possession of Talpioth wherein they built fine houses and settled down. This Talpioth was eventually attacked by Bedouins. I then acted as inquirer and eventually a corporation was granted by Government to Talpioth. Here my old friend, the late Mr. Caspi, and many others whom we well knew, reigned for a while.

Now, it appears that this Hebron Arab Force, which had been making our life hideous, had heard that the Jews had formed a garrison at Talpioth and that they had taken possession of Allenby Barracks, and in an hour or two were coming up at Deir Abu Tor; and indeed they did so, and it is almost impossible to realize what had happened next. The Arab inhabitants, panic stricken, had fled in all directions and had left the Jews a walk over. Of which situation, it is not at all to be surprised at, they (the Jews) took advantage.

#### FACING CATASTROPHE

Now then, there comes another scene. The Jews had immediately found the necessity of fortifying Deir Abu Tor within the compound. And well they might, for as is well known, Abdullah (Arab chieftain of Trans-jordan) had allowed the Arab Legion to blast Deir Abu Tor. At this time it was that our risk of destruction was utmost; it must be remembered that our little house was in the actual firing line with the blasting of the Army. And thus it went on.

Those who were in occupation before the Jews arrived, as I said before, all fled one way or another as best they could, and only God knows where they are today. But today it is devastation, and it was not the Jews who made it such; it was the Arab Legion who bombed the place ruthlessly.



The little villa in which Mrs. Shelley and her faithful Hanna were dwelling was being bombed to pieces. The shutters were of the very strongest iron, and so also the doors, and yet the blasting of the bombs and shrapnel penetrated the villa and left Mrs. Shelley and Hanna expecting death every minute, without light or water, in an inner room.

#### DELIVERANCE

When the Jews arrived they were most kind to us; we had no gas, no light, no phone, no water. The Jews did their best, but of course could not control the tremendous onslaught of the equipped Arab Legion, so that at the present moment all that beautiful spot is practically gone.

Now then, we must recall the political situation for a moment which took place after the surrender of the Turks back in 1917. When in the First World War Allenby had been successful, there was found in Egypt a nest of what we might call, to put it mildly, patricians. When Storrs (British commander) came up here to take charge of the city, he placed a Moslem mayor over the city, the city in which his own Crucified Redeemer suffered for his sake. When he was challenged, he said, "Would you rather have a Jew?" And this crowned him a Judas; what Judas did, Storrs was repeating.

And therefore, when Allenby found these men, he arranged with the Egyptian Government that these patricians, notably Storrs, Bowman, Young, and Richmond, be relieved of their duties; and emoluments and pension rights were given them in a lump sum settlement.

#### JEW-HATE IN OFFICIAL CIRCLES

Now, these men had come up here determined to hamper the Jews; and when they got the opportunity it was

their purpose to quench any prosperity likely to arise from Jewish activities.

It is very interesting to recall what was the result of their activity. Out of the cutting of a London paper, I found this information:

"On November the 13th, 1940, members of an influential Moslem Committee were presented to the King by Lord Lloyd to express their appreciation of a promised gift by the British Government of a site in London for a Mosque and a Moslem cultural centre!"

Now we can understand the work of the patricians. This promise of a Mosque and a Moslem cultural centre ended up with the presentation of God's Land to Abdullah, and this was to be supported and sustained by British troops, who in part would no doubt claim the land. But today they are an acknowledged failure, and the Jews cannot and will not be driven out; on the contrary, they take every advantage to strengthen and extend their positions, and no doubt they will, in the fulfillment of Scripture under the promise of Isaiah 54:17.

#### A CRY FROM A SOUL UNDER THE ALTAR

In the white-hot crucible of Israel's agony in Europe, our testimony has been used of God to reach souls that cry from under the altar. Out of torture-ridden Czechoslovakia comes this glad word of a soul redeemed. As you read, just send up a prayer of thanks to God that He thus honors your testimony and ours even in this darkest hour of despair.

I HAVE set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth" Is-

ayah 62:6, 7). "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (I Peter 2:9).

Peace and every good thing forever to you, my dear brethren and sisters in the Lord Jesus, the Messiah, blessed be His name!

First, I would like to let you know that just now, I received with great joy the Holy Scriptures in the Hebrew language, the T'nach and six New Testaments, for which I was impatiently waiting so long. I considered them to be lost, but praise be to God, they came and now I am sure that they will enlighten the darkened eyes so that they may see the only right way, which is our Saviour, the Lord Jesus, the Messiah, blessed be His name.

Second, I'm overwhelmed with great joy to let you know that I received your blessed written words with the enclosed dollar bill and also the five pairs of nylon stockings and the other things which you have sent me. (The stockings were sent because he could sell them at fabulous prices, for more than if we sent him money. So, he can now buy bread. *Ed. Note.*) What shall I say? There are no words in our poor human language to express that which I feel toward you. I see in you not merely human beings but angels sent from God, for you have revived me, giving me new courage and new ambition to go on in my daily tasks. When I was in the concentration camp under the shadow of death, and going through severe punishment, I learned then to trust the Lord and to be faithful to Him and He always showed me a way of escape. Yes, I learned to trust the Lord and He never disappointed me. So now in this hard time. He knows

my heart, my good intentions, my faithfulness to Him, no matter what may come, and He, through His blessed Holy Spirit, has spoken to your hearts. Please, if it is possible, tell everybody who had a part in the help which you gave to me, that there is not a greater thing on this earth that they can do, apart from that which they have done for me. In the olden times I was in business for myself. After that great disaster, I came out together with my family naked, without any material means to exist. My wife is a tailoress, and she was the only one who could provide something to live on.

"MY SHOES HAVE PATCHES—BUT  
I DON'T WORRY."

My best suit, which I keep only for the holy days, is not in bad condition, but you, in no wise, would be able to determine its original color. Now, you can imagine my everyday clothes. My shoes have so many patches on them that it is impossible to find an empty space. I'm telling you this just to give you a little idea of my circumstances. Yet this does not worry me a bit. The main thing that is worrying me is to find a haven of rest, where I would be free to do my service for my Lord, for this is the termination of my life and my vow to Him. This is the only ambition of my life. Otherwise, there is nothing else left for me to live for.

#### "BY THEIR FRUITS"

Your help to me was not the only thing that brought joy and comfort to me, but it was a great testimony to my brother-in-law, who is an unbeliever. He was astonished to see what you have done and to hear what you are ready to do for me in the future. He cannot understand how people, who do not know me, have never seen me personally, and who

are absolute strangers to me, can do such things. (*Editor's note: we had of course made our own private investigation of this brother unknown to him, before we concluded to help him.*) I explained to him that it is not because of the good in us, for in us dwelleth no good thing, but because they are born-again men and women gifted with a new nature which is given from above.

Thank you for your wise and considerate advice for me to go to Israel, from where it will be much easier for me to come to America. I went to the Consulate of Israel and had a personal talk with the Consul. He promised me that in a few weeks I will receive a certificate that I have been accepted as a citizen of Israel. That will give me the right to work for a release from Czechoslovakia. But it is not so easy that way I'm telling you. It is bounded with great expenses and many difficulties. Much money is needed. Our country is very poor now, and for any little favor you have to pay money, especially when it comes to leaving the country. So I'm looking first to God and then to you, my dear brethren and sisters in the Lord, and am sure that you will do the best you can and will accomplish that which you begin.

Now the God of peace, Who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, reward you for everything you have done and will do on my behalf; and may He establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God.

"If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?"

— James 2:15, 16.

## ORCHIDS TO OKLAHOMA

TO a brother and sister beloved in the Lord, Rev. and Mrs. William D. Stewart, of Oklahoma City, we take off our hats, and give thanks to God. Mr. Stewart is known in Oklahoma City, as "Brother Bill", and many a happy soul in that city dates the time of happiness back to the hour when through "Brother Bill's" passionate pleading he surrendered to Him who gave His life for his redemption.

To such a gathering it was our privilege to minister recently in a four-day Bible Conference. The City Bible Church is located on Northeast 23rd. Street, and is made up of born-again believers on the Lord Jesus Christ, who recognize no denominational affiliation apart from being a member of the Body of Christ, and together with us rejoice in being pilgrims on the way to the heavenly Jerusalem.

### WHATSOEVER YE SHALL ASK — BELIEVING

On the first night of our meetings, "Brother Bill" introduced us and announced confidently and in full faith, "I want the City Bible Church to give on this occasion of Dr. Cohn's visit, for the world-wide work of The American Board of Missions to the Jews, an offering not less than \$5,000." To say that he startled the audience is to put it mildly, for this was a challenge that he put to them as being God's direct and urgent will in this tragic hour of Israel's dispersion. Night after night he kept plodding away, never doubting; we came to the Sunday morning meeting with \$1,600 of offerings. This did not in any way discourage "Brother Bill". He just got up and told his devoted people plainly that if they should fall down on this challenge, it would be because some in that

audience were unfaithful to the trust that God had committed to them.

By the end of the afternoon meeting, it was announced that a total of \$3,800 had been received; we entered the closing meeting on Sunday night with \$1,200 lacking of the goal that had been set. Once more "Brother Bill", in language and in passionate appeal such as I have rarely heard in my years of labor, told the people solemnly that he must have the \$5,000 before the night meeting was finished, and they must pray earnestly, and examine their hearts.

### AN EXULTANT DOXOLOGY

The evening service closed, the offering was taken, and the people were so excited and so engrossed in what the results might be, that they stayed on for a dedication service while the ushers were counting the money. The back door opened, and dear Brother Walker, the Financial Secretary, came in with a broad smile on his face. He handed a slip of paper to "Brother Bill" who read to the audience, "The offering has reached a total of \$5,600!" Spontaneously the audience rose to its feet and sang the Doxology.

We felt that this remarkable and even sensational report should be published, because it must be that God has an urgent need in these last days for sacrificial giving in behalf of Israel's evangelization. Here we have people who have for years been seeking only God's will, and a pastor whose life is devoted only to the doing of God's will. And these people made it a matter of profound and earnest prayer as to what God would have them do. The answer was made manifest in the giving of what is possibly the largest offering ever taken at any one public meeting for the cause of Jewish Missions, at least to our knowledge. Perhaps this story

will stir the consciences of many other pastors and their churches, and perchance it is the beginning of a flow of funds for the Jewish Mission undertaking over the wide world that may well reach into the millions before the Lord suddenly appears on the Mount of Olives. What a priceless and inestimable testimony it would be if a thousand or ten thousand Christian churches should now awake and emulate what this little body of believers has done out in Oklahoma City. We think that the whole membership is perhaps about 300, and not one of them could be called rich in this world's goods. These facts make the accomplishment sensational, and all the more an honor to the Lord Jesus Christ. As we close this report perhaps we ought to ask, "Who will be next?"

### FROM A HOSPITAL BED — A TESTIMONY

(From his sick bed, this Jewish brother tells how our Gospel tracts led him to the Lord.)

#### DEAR BROTHER AND FRIEND:

From my sick bed at Kings County Hospital I am anxious to convey to you my very sincere thanks for your pamphlet, "Behold the Virgin." (It was given to me by Mrs. Frank.) This has certainly opened my eyes. It caused me to think back to the things I studied as a youngster but of which I never realized the true meaning.

I hope and pray that my Lord Jesus Christ will be good enough to me to let me survive my present illness so that I may have the pleasure of meeting you personally to convey to you my sincere gratitude for opening my eyes to the real truth.

Sincerely and devotedly yours for the Light that never fails. — J. D. G.



## Studies in Jonah

By CHARLES L. FEINBERG, Th.D., Ph.D., Professor of Semitics and Old Testament, Los Angeles Bible Theological Seminary, Los Angeles, Calif.

### INSTALMENT I

#### Introduction and Chapter 1



DR. FEINBERG

NOTHING is known of the prophet Jonah apart from this book and the historical statement in II Kings 14:25. His name means "dove" and that of his father, "truthful." The prophet's home was in Gath-hepher which is in Zebulun (Joshua 19:13), north of Nazareth in Galilee. Note the error of the enemies of the Lord Jesus in John 7:52. The Book of Jonah itself is sufficient to give us insight into the character and life of the much-discussed and much-scorned prophet.

#### A RIDICULED BOOK

Unbelief has attacked this book probably more than any other in the Bible. It has been made the butt of ill-advised humor and undeserved ridicule. This book is the great missionary book of the Old Testament. We can judge how important the Jews consider this book when they read it during the solemn hours of the Day of Atonement. Some question has arisen concerning the book because it does contain history and narrative to the practical exclusion of prophecy or prediction. There is an absence of the usual prophetic discourse. But there are those who realize that the book is among the prophets, not because of the historical events it records, but because the transactions in it

are prophecies themselves. The book is a remarkable prophecy of the entire history of the people of Israel, as well as a clear prediction of the resurrection of Christ. See Matthew 12:39-41 and 16:4. Ridicule has especially centered around the swallowing of Jonah by the fish and his preservation in it. The root of the difficulty is the denial of the miraculous. But if we exclude the miraculous from our Bibles, how much of it do we have left? And more important, what kind of a God do we have left? It is nothing less than shortsighted unbelief to think that the difficulty is solved by the removal of this miracle from the Book of Jonah. The prophecy is full of miracles. Note these clear miracles in the book: the storm; the selection of Jonah by lot as guilty; the sudden subsiding of the sea; the great fish appearing at the right time; the preservation of Jonah; his ejection from the fish, safe and sound, on shore; the gourd; the worm; the east wind; and greatest of all by all reckonings, the repentance of the entire city of Nineveh. The book is an integral unit like the human body; cut it where you will and it will bleed. The trusting child of God is not afraid of the miraculous, for his God is the God of the miraculous. And more, this perennial scorn of the miracle of the swallowing of Jonah has served all too long to swallow up the central message of the book which is the love of God for all the world, as we shall see more fully later.

### CALL AND DISOBEDIENCE OF JONAH

Those who would designate this prophecy a myth, legend, allegory, or parable cannot explain satisfactorily why the book begins in accepted prophetic style (see Zechariah 6:9; 8:1; and other instances in the prophetic books). God's word to Jonah was a clear and unmistakable command to go to heathen Nineveh and preach against it because of its grievous wickedness. This is the only case of a prophet being sent to the heathen. Nineveh, mentioned for the first time in Genesis 10:11, was the ancient capital of the Assyrian empire on the eastern bank of the Tigris River. It was made the capital of Assyria by Sennacherib and was destroyed by the Medes and Persians in 612 B.C. Classical writers inform us that the city, in the shape of a trapezium, was the largest city in the world in that day. (Compare 3:2, 3; 4:11.) The prophet was commissioned to preach against the city because of its great sin and corruption. For a similar expression of sin see Genesis 18:21 (Sodom and Gomorrah); for the wording note I Samuel 5:12. God commanded Jonah to go, but he was of a contrary mind. He fled to Tarshish. The prophets were not mere machines; they had power to resist the will of God. However, this is the only instance on record where a prophet refused to carry out his commission. Nineveh was east of Palestine, while Tarshish was west. According to the Greek historian, Herodotus, Tarshish was in southern Spain. The latest Biblical atlases identify it as a Phoenician smelting center in Spain or Sardinia, the name being found in both places. There is no evidence to identify Tarshish with England. How did Jonah expect to flee from the presence of the Lord? He was

not ignorant of the omniscience and omnipresence of God (Psalm 139:7-12; Jeremiah 23:24), but was fleeing from the land of Israel where the Lord manifestly dwelt in the temple. See Genesis 4:16 for a similar expression. Included may be the thought of his escape from or abandonment of the service of the Lord. Joppa, the modern Mediterranean seaport of Jaffa, was used as a harbor as early as the time of Solomon. Compare II Chronicles 2:16. It is interesting indeed that at this same place the apostle Peter needed the vision from heaven to send him forth with the gospel to the Gentile Cornelius. Note Acts 10:5 ff.

#### THE STORM

Jonah may flee, but God has not relinquished His sovereignty over nature or His creatures. God sent (literally, "hurled") a mighty wind and tempest on the sea. The winds are His servants (Psalm 104:4). It was gracious of God to seek out His disobedient servant and not to allow him to remain long in his sin. The mariners, accustomed to storms on the Mediterranean, knew this to be no ordinary tempest, and were seized with fear. Probably most of the sailors were Phoenicians but from different places and worshipped different gods. In addition to their prayers the men began casting the goods of the ship into the sea to lighten the burden and hence prevent the ship from sinking. The conduct of the sailors throughout appears most commendable, judged from the details that are given us. While all this fear and consternation and feverish activity were taking place, Jonah, probably from the fatigue of the journey to Joppa and the anxiety preying on his mind, had gone down into one of the recesses of the ship and fallen asleep. It is well known how often sin brings

insensibility with it also. What a shame that the prophet of God had to be called to pray by a heathen. How the Mohammedan with his five times of prayer daily puts us to shame as believers. Are there among us those who remember not to lift their hearts to God once a day? In all probability Jonah did pray to God, but the storm was not quieted. The men concluded that there must be on board one who was guilty of some great crime, and they decided to cast lots in order to find out the guilty individual. The casting of lots was not against the will of God. Note the casting of lots with Achan (Joshua 7:16 ff.), in the division of the land under Joshua (Joshua 15:1), in the case of Jonathan's trespass (I Samuel 14:36-42), and in the choosing of Matthias (Acts 1:26). We read: "The lot is cast into the lap; But the whole disposing thereof is of Jehovah" (Proverbs 16:33). After the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost we do not read of the lot for the believer. The indwelling Spirit now is all-sufficient for guidance in the life of every believer, and He does so in accord with the Word of God. The lot pointed out guilty Jonah. The questions of the mariners did not show that they doubted the lot, but rather that they wanted Jonah himself to confess that of which he was guilty. Jonah's answers are forthright. He declares himself to be a Hebrew (the name of the Israelites among foreigners, Genesis 39:14, 17; 40:15) and a worshipper of Jehovah who was Creator of the heaven, the sea, and the dry land. At this reply the sailors were thrown into a panic of fright, for the storm proclaimed the omnipotence of God better than Jonah could. These heathen mariners were more aroused and alarmed by the flagrant disobedience of Jonah than the prophet of God

himself was. What a rebuke it should have been to him!

#### JONAH IN THE SEA

When the sea kept growing more and more tempestuous, the mariners asked Jonah what course of action should be taken. They did not want to mete out a punishment of their own when they realized the power of the God whom Jonah had offended. The answer of Jonah reveals him in a better light than anywhere else in the entire book. It took real courage to advise them as he did. Note that he did not throw himself into the sea, for there is a vast difference between an awakened conscience and a despairing conscience. Jonah confesses he is worthy of death and is willing to endure the punishment. These are noble words from a true servant of God. He was willing to sacrifice himself to save those about to die. How like our Lord Jesus in this, although our Lord did not bring about the calamity, as Jonah did by his waywardness. But if Jonah's words were noble, the acts of the sailors were also. For the men tried to spare his life. They rowed hard (literally, "to dig through"), putting forth every effort to make land. But the tempest grew worse. Then the men called upon God not to lay innocent blood to their account. They had more concern for one life than Jonah had for hundreds of thousands in Nineveh. It is clear that although these heathen sailors did not know the law of God given to Israel, yet they knew that the life of man is precious in the sight of God (Genesis 9:5, 6). They realized, too, that the lot and word of the prophet, as well as the storm, were indications of the sovereign will of God in the matter. God had done as it pleased Him. This was discernment of no low order. With the casting of Jo-

nah into the sea, it became calm. Truly God spares the praying penitent one: the sailors experience this truth now, as Jonah and the city of Nineveh do later. With the cessation of the raging of the sea the mariners again witness the omnipotence of God. In reverential fear of the Lord they offer sacrifice unto Him of that which they have on ship with them, and make vows to be performed when they reach their intended destination.

#### JONAH IN THE FISH

But the Lord is not through dealing with His servant. The Lord prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. One of the ancient rabbis suggested that this fish was prepared for this purpose at the creation of the world. The Hebrew word means "appoint, order." God arranged it that the fish should be there when Jonah was cast into the sea. The character and dimensions of the fish are of secondary importance for us. More important than the fish is the man. We dare not be sidetracked and lose sight of the principal agent with whom God is here

dealing. No natural explanations can account for all the facts in this case. Jonah's preservation in the belly of the fish can only be explained as a miracle. Our Lord Jesus Himself calls it a "sign" in Matthew 12:39.

#### ARE WE FLEEING?

We have been accustomed to make much of the disobedience of Jonah when called to go to the heathen, and of the instruction needful for Peter before he would go to the home of the Gentile Cornelius. But have we done any better? How willing have we been to carry the gospel's blessed light to the unsaved among Israel? Have we fled the call? Have we turned a deaf ear to the pleadings of the Spirit and the desire of the heart of the Savior? May we each judge his and her own heart that we may be found, not as Jonah fleeing the known will of God, but embracing and following it that Israel may yet hear and trust the gentle Shepherd of Israel and find eternal life with exceeding joy. Thus shall we meet Him on that Day, unashamed.

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