

cry in such phrases as "O Lord, my God," "I remembered the Lord," and "my prayer came in unto Thee." Men will never turn to the Lord so long as they have some hope of working out solutions for themselves.

3. By their PERFORMANCE of the FRUIT of affliction.

When God's children aver:-

a. Their desire to sacrifice.

There is a sort of anticipated deliverance in these words. But in a sense Jonah says that he would, if he had the opportunity, present the sacrifices described by the law and he would do this with the voice of thanksgiving. Nothing forced now, but willingly.

b. Their desire to vow.

The question here settles upon his own his own life should God return it to him. He had given himself to the Lord, now he vows this shall truly be the case.

Conclusion All of the above is in a sense the attitude and activities of the believer. Lest one feel, however, that this is promoting a sort of "do-it-yourself" spiritual rehabilitation, mark carefully that Jonah admitted.

1. His deliverance from the Lord (v. 9).
2. God's activity with creation (v. 10).

What all this amounts to is this: when a child of God bends before the Lord, he is enabled of the Lord to triumph despite his own inabilities (Luke 5:5). Oh, to submit to the purpose and will of God. If you find yourself at wits end corners today, turn to Him (Psa. 107:6, 13, 19, 28). It is forever true that...He setteth the poor on high from affliction, and maketh him familites like a flock (Psa. 107:41). Amen.

THE BOOK OF JONAH

"The Depth of Affliction"

Jonah 2:4-10

Introduction

1. All know the experience of suffering! It is the common lot of all. But those who suffer because of disobedience to the will of God know the sting of suffering and the sweetness of God's unflinching mercy! This is the case with Jonah.

2. The fish's viscera became the prayer room for the fleeing prophet. There he poured out his soul unto the Lord. It was in the depths of his need that he lifted his heart to the Lord. What a prayer meeting this was! How we need more like these.

3. But God delivered his servant from his affliction. He never allows His children to wallow in despair - IF they turn to Him. How does He do this? Here are some of the spiritual means by which He moves: -

1. By their ACCEPTANCE of the FACTS of affliction.

When God's children admit:-

a. Their removal from God.

This is what Johah did. The verb "cast out" means to be driven forth or expelled. It is used of mire and dust (Isa. 57:20) and of waves (Isa. 57:20). Also of the nations (Ex. 34:11) and of Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:24). He had wilfully withdrawn from the Lord; now God had expelled him from before His eyes! It is terrific picture of despair.

Three phrases are used to detail the dreadful situation of the prophet:

- 1) Waters compassed him. These came

even to his soul. To draw a breath would have meant death.

2) Depth closed him. The verb here has basically the same meaning as the previous one, namely, to surround. Hence, this is an expansion of the preceding phrase. The word depths means the mass of raging waters so called from the noise and roaring. That Jonah was in the caverns of the sea is without doubt!

3) Weeds wrapped him. The verb used here means to bind around or bind fast. Like a grave band, the weeds of the depths had saddled Jonah's head.

NOTE: If one takes the depths to be around Jonah's body and the weeds his head, the whole body was covered completely. The terror of it all is that the affliction had reached inside to his soul also! He felt himself completely estranged from God.

b. Their directional movement.

The key verb here is "went down." It notes the extent of the removal and the direction thereof. Disobedience and rejection of the will of God can only lead in one direction - down! This descent is explained as:-

1) The bottom. The word used here is the Hebrew for "cuttings off." It notes the extremities and foundations of the mountains which are in the depths of the sea.

2) The earth. The bar of the earth seems to indicate that the bars which are related to the gates of sheol were drawn before him. Hence, he was incarcerated in the recesses of and eternal doom! There was no further point to which he could move.

c. Their internal distress.

Physical discomfort is one matter, but when the very essence of a man is touched--then! This is the point to which Jonah had been

brought. Here are his own words: "When my soul fainted within me...(v. 7)." The verb here means to be "dizzied" or "overwhelmed." It is used of faintness from heat (4:8), thirst (Amos 8:13), and exhaustion (Isa. 51:20). When a film comes over the eyes and the brain is, as it were, mantled over--that's the thing that happened to Jonah. Men must come to this end for God to work.

2. By their REPENTANCE for the CAUSES of affliction.

When God's children acknowledge:-

a. Their own vanity.

In a strong statement, Jonah points to the fact that he had trusted in the flesh and pursued a path which was outside the will of God. The verb "observe" is the Hebrew for "diligently watch, pay deference to, count." This is what he had done. He had idols of the flesh, intellect, ambition, pride, self-will. But these all proved to be "lying vanities." They vanished like air into air. He had come now to see the fearful error of his way. Repentance sees the futility of one's own way and thence turns to the Lord!

b. Their God's mercy. This is the positive side of repentance. In turning to self and the lying vanities mentioned, Jonah had ignored and forsaken the mercy of God! This he now admitted and acknowledged the bankruptcy of his position. Anything of self and this world is a denial of God's mercy. But it's a hard thing for men to come to Him; they yearn to depend upon themselves. Isn't this the crux of so many who do not turn to the Lord?

c. Their earnest prayer. Prior to this, Jonah did not pray, but now he does. Here his