

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET JONAH

In treating of the testimony of the Prophets to Christ and his ^{kingdom} we propose to discuss the books belonging to the so-called Minor Prophets. We shall treat of them in their chronological order as we may naturally expect advance in the development of the matter of which they prophecy. There is a history of the revelation of God's purposes respecting mankind.

There are two prophets whose priority in time is in question: Jonah and Joel. They must have been very nearly contemporaneous. This raises the question whether it is possible that either of them can in any sense be introductory of all that follow and so offer one or more key-notes in regard to the significance and general drift of their messages. And indeed, both stand forth in a striking manner for something characteristic in virtue of which each is introductory of a particular phase of prophetic activity. Jonah, namely, represents the prophetic personality in its whims and weaknesses, needing Divine direction and restraint; while Joel's book furnishes the striking example of the prophetic message itself. "It is remarkable that Joel, coming at the very beginning^s of written prophecy (B.C. 836), gives the fullest view of the consummation of all written prophecy" (Scofield).

We can, then, not greatly sin against chronology if we begin our studies with the book of the Prophet Jonah, who is the type of the prophet as a personality. It describes personal reactions ^{to} God's call and counsel.

Our discussion, then, begins with that short book which is everywhere spoken against, which has served as a constant butt of ridicule, which has supplied material for innumerable witticisms. It is furthermore that book, the acceptance of whose historical character has in some quarters become the test of theological ^{santi}ty.