

The book of Jonah is remarkable in many respects. on account of its brevity, on account of its seemingly impossible and irrelevant contents, on account of its abrupt ending, it has challenged the worldly-wise man^f and the enemy of the truth. It has been subjected to the merciless assaults of criticism. But as little as the Great Fish could overcome the prophet, // so little have doubt and unbelief been able to assimilate it for its own purposes. At first blush it would seem that the value of the book would lie in its entertaining contents as curious as unusual, so graphic and picturesque. But who would think it weighty ^oenough to convey a special contribution to the understanding of the Divine Mind, or to see in it a development of His majestic ways in dealing with mankind?

I. We are told by the Lord Jesus Christ, the very person to whom all the prophets testify, that the prophet Jonah is a "sign". He is declared to be a sign to the Jews of the Savior's day, and he is also become a "sign unto the Ninvites" (Luke 11:29-32; Matt. 12: 39-41). In what respect, we ask, may he have been a sign to these? Edersheim says: "The Jews challenged the Divine Mission of Christ by some visible sign. He offered them only the sign of Jonah. As Jonah appeared in Nineveh he was himself a "sign unto the Ninevites"; the fact that he had been three days and nights in the belly of the whale and that thence he had, so to speak, been sent forth alive to preach in Nineveh was evidence to them that he had been sent of God. Thus would Christ's resurrection attest His Divine Mission." And we may add that, connected with this mission, there was also the message of pardon. While judgment was preached to Nineveh (and for aught we know the possibility of pardon was not held out to them), nevertheless they repen^ted, and God spared them. Now Jonah was also a sign unto them in this respect that, having been spared himself, so might