

Annotations on the Prophet Jonah

By John Oecolampadius

Preface

Since Christ is the aim of all Prophets, as you have in Acts 3 and 13, because all Prophets spoke about him, for he himself is the fullness of the law, therefore he must be sought first of all. But how he is found in this Prophet, listen to the Lord himself bearing witness about himself in Matthew 12 and Luke 11: A wicked and adulterous generation, he says, seeks a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the Prophet Jonah. For just as Jonah was in the belly of the whale for three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights. Where clearly this which happened to Jonah is shown to be a type of Christ suffering and rising. And not only do we recognize the humility and glory of Christ, but also the calling of the Gentiles and the blinding of the Jews, and thus the kingdom of Christ becomes known to us. For just as Jonah did not preach to the Ninevites until after the great fish vomited him out, so also Christ did not manifest himself to the Gentiles except after the resurrection, but when Christ manifested himself to the Gentiles, the people of the Jews were blinded. Thus the Israelites of the ten tribes, whose Prophet Jonah was, did not repent at his preaching, but when the Ninevites repented, they themselves persisted in their sins. Who could set a clearer example before our eyes? Meanwhile, other useful things should not be neglected, namely, that the preacher should obey God in all things, that he should bear the cross, and moreover recognize God's kindness towards all nations. For these and many other things will occur when we begin to explain the Prophet. But who that Jonah was, from what parents he was born, under which king he prophesied, let it suffice for us what we read in 2 Kings 14, how Jeroboam son of Joash restored the border of Israel from the entrance of Hamath to the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the Lord God of Israel, which he spoke through his servant Jonah son of Amittai, the prophet, who was from Gath Hepher, etc. We find in that place that Jonah existed under Jeroboam, equal to the Prophets Amos, Isaiah, and Hosea. It is certain, moreover, that he prophesied other things besides those contained in this little book, as is quite evident in the aforementioned place. It is also a fable that some

think Jonah was the son of the widow of Zarephath, whom Elisha had raised: he was a Hebrew as the sacred writings testify, while that widow was Sidonian and a Gentile.

Chapter 1.

1 And the word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai, saying.

Let that construction not trouble you, when nothing precedes, “And the word came”. The sense is, Among many other things that happened in those times, this memorable event also occurred, which was done in the Prophet Jonah. We will see there the wondrous works of God. There are those who think it is not a continuative expression, but in my opinion they are mistaken. For we also begin books with “But” and similar little words.

WORD.) That is, the command and order of the Lord. In other Prophets I have said what it means to speak. We can take it for the whole cause and matter. Jonah from interpretation is dove (יִבְחָ), otherwise it would be “afflicting” with segol, but both suit Prophets. It is theirs to be endowed with dove-like simplicity, then with truth itself they are accustomed to afflict the impious.

AMITTAI.) His father was so called: a name derived from truth, which also suits the Prophet himself. Simplicity and truth teach excellently; although the dove also signifies the grace of the Holy Spirit. We will see first that Jonah was not of the number of those who run without being called, but being called and ordered by God he shrank from the duty, like Moses and Jeremiah, for very difficult things were commanded to Jonah. Although moreover we will not excuse him from sin, yet it is far more tolerable to consider oneself unworthy of this work either through modesty or faintheartedness, than to run uncalled. There is less danger in those who refuse when called, than in those who run without being called.

2 Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach in it, for their wickedness has come up before me.

Here we learn that God, who is the creator of all, also has care and concern for all. For God’s providence extends to all nations (Rom. 3). God is not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles. This appears in the Ninevites, who, though strangers to the Law of Moses and circumcision, are nevertheless not despised by God. Thus we see the same God of old who is also today. For those who

are not despised by God should not be despised by us either. Jonah ought by no means to despise them. We see indeed that the Jewish people were in some way more familiar to God, but whatever was done with the Jewish people, it turned out for the benefit of other nations. God did not speak to all from among the Jews, but to some, like Moses, Samuel, Elijah. Nor to all the people, nevertheless God is of the whole people. So also when God showed himself more familiar to the Jewish people, and doing this out of his mere grace, nevertheless he was the God of all. And just as the Prophets were to the Jewish people, so the Jews were to all nations. For when other nations saw what God was doing wonderfully among his people, they should have been called from there to the knowledge of the one God. Let Rahab be an example, whom terror had seized. And that should have resulted in the instruction of all neighboring nations. God is accustomed sometimes to do works which are celebrated throughout the whole world, as in Babel, when he gave a command that the true God should be worshiped throughout the whole world. Similarly in Cyrus, when he saw the wonderful works of God among the people of Israel. We do not read, moreover, that the Ninevites were idolaters, but cruel, proud, harsh, stubborn, etc. In this city God wanted to work wonders: for it was the metropolis of the kingdom of the Assyrians, which kingdom was then most powerful and flourishing. The kingdoms of Syria and the Moabites were humble, compared to the kingdom of the Assyrians. Hence what happened in that greatest city was spread throughout the whole world. Thus the Jewish people and the Prophets served the nations. Although most Jews were not persuaded of this. Even today such voices are heard from some, "Who does not keep the law is not saved": but they are mistaken, and judge rashly.

ARISE, GO.) Cry out against it. But what he should teach, we will have below. וְ is not a rational conjunction, nor does it signify cause, but rather shows what he should preach, namely to reproach his people for their sins. As if he says to Jonah, Go to that King and his princes, and tell them their crimes. Here, moreover, it appears how heavy a province has been laid on the shoulders of the Prophet. Who among us would not be afraid if we were ordered to cry out preaching the crimes of the Turk, or another king, in his presence.

HAS COME UP.) Thus we read also about the Sodomites, how the cry of Sodom had ascended to heaven. So the Lord says of Abel, The voice of blood. The oppression of the poor, and that insolence is more abominable to God than other sins, and in the Scriptures that sin is said to cry out to heaven. It is wickedness when neighbors are afflicted. Preach this to them. It is not said, first preach repentance to them, and I will save the city, but go and tell this most proud people their sins. It is therefore not surprising if the Prophet is horrified at such a grave duty. Now for many years he had preached to his own people, and saw that fruit. What will he accomplish in others? Having taken the risk from his own, he easily gathered that those who knew God less would not hear his voice. Nevertheless, although the Lord's command was hard, he ought to have obeyed. You now have the calling of the Prophet.

3 And Jonah arose to flee by sea from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish, and paid his fare, and went down into it, to come with them to Tarshish from the face of the Lord.

Jonah seems to act very foolishly here. For since he was a Prophet, he was not so foolish as not to know that God is the creator of heaven and earth, and of all things, and therefore that God is everywhere, and that no one can hide from the face of God; yet he arises to flee. They put forward such a reason, that Jonah thought that since he did not live in the land of Israel, but was acting among polluted men, he would be freed from this precept. And that the Spirit of God was given to him while he was acting among the children of Israel. Where there is no faith and false religion, there God is said not to be. The Prophet considered with himself how great a burden had been imposed on him by the Lord, and thought it would be more useful for him if he went to other nations. The Hebrews observe "from the presence" (מִלִּפְנֵי), that is, before the people among whom God was uniquely worshiped; and he thought that if he could flee from that place, he would be freed. However, he is not excused because of this, since he was disobedient. They adduce another very plausible reason, because he knew that if the Ninevites repented, this would be the greatest reproach to his people. For the Jews always abhorred the Gentiles, and considered themselves alone holy. It was so grave for all to think that glory would be

taken away from his people. Peter seems to have suffered something similar in Acts. He arises therefore and thinks he can escape, but he struggles against God in vain.

TARSHISH.) Others say sea: I would prefer it to be the name of a place, whether you think it Cilicia or Africa. The Greeks say it is Carthage. There are those who thought it was India. But those who want to flee Assyria from Palestine do not seek India and eastern places, but rather western ones. You see from these that the Prophet wanted to flee as far away as possible.

HE WENT DOWN TO JOPPA.) For Joppa is a port of Palestine. Our people, when they disembark from ships, when they seek Jerusalem, reach this port. And there was a station of ships there. Even today the Tyrians have much business with the people of Tarshish. For Carthage is a colony of the Sidonians. He took himself into a ship to go as far away as possible, and lest he be repelled, he immediately paid his fare. Since almost this whole Jonah bears the type of Christ, let us not neglect that honest allegory. Christ came into the little ship to flee Nineveh, obeying the Father, but at first he did not want to preach to the Gentiles. And this was without sin in Christ. He was for a time among the Jews, to whom he also preached. He also said to the disciples not to go into the cities of the Gentiles. Thus in a way he was in the little ship.

4 And the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a great storm in the sea, and the ship was thought to break.

Now he indicates how the Lord manifested the Prophet's sin, and how gravely he sinned by refusing the burden which God had imposed on him.

Reading II.

We consider two things in blessed Jonah, both that he refused God's command out of human fear, and that he bore the type of Christ: from there we will have some things that pertain to confirming our faith and patience. And somewhere an allegory occurs, which must be handled with the utmost reverence; and somewhere, unless we wish to construct something absurd, it must be left alone. That we hear Jonah fled to Tarshish, this was of one disobedient, and in this respect he sinned, which is manifest. But in this that he wished well to the Jews, he seems to have been a lover of God's

glory, since God has always pursued his people with the greatest favor, and thus this deed has a specimen of virtue. Christ at first preached to the Jews, but also wept over the destruction of the Jews when he saw the city of Jerusalem, and thus he presented the example of Christ. However, the salvation of Nineveh, that is, of the world, could not stand except by the destruction of the Jews according to God's counsel.

AND THE LORD.) First let us see Jonah sinning: because he was disobedient, it is not surprising if soon punishment and vengeance followed. God sent the wind, so that this sinner might think with himself how grave it is to transgress God's precept; although Jonah was still secure with himself, and was not thinking how much he had offended God. Therefore such a great tempest is sent for the sake of reconsidering. For usually lazy minds are more excited to self-knowledge by cross and adversity than by word and admonition. Indeed many others had sinned, and perhaps the sailors who were in the ship with the Prophet: but the Lord wanted to correct this sin of Jonah. When he says, there was a storm, so that the ship seemed to break, the Hebrews put a miracle, which is quite likely to have happened, from which greater fear invaded the sailors, who recognized that sin was the cause of their shipwreck, because in that storm other ships passed without danger, only that one in which Jonah was was endangered: whence it came into their minds that it was not a common storm, but sent by divine will. Furthermore when we think that Jonah is a type of Christ, we also recognize that Christ the prince of peace, when he came into the world, a great tumult arose. Then as soon as the Magi from the East indicated to Herod that the king of the Jews was born, both Herod himself and all Jerusalem with him were troubled. This happens daily, whenever the word of God is purely announced, seditions are excited. Not that the word of God is seditious in itself, but because the adversaries of truth are so weak and impatient of light, they hardly bear their rebuke. And because of this, after Jonah entered the ship, Christ was born as a man, the world began to go mad, Pontiffs, Pharisees, Pope, Bishops etc. But it is not a common persecution which arises because of the word of God, but such that the ship itself seems to be broken, and the very number of the elect to perish. The ship is a type of the synagogue, just as Noah's ark is of the Church.

5 And the sailors were afraid, and cried out each one to his god, and they threw the vessels themselves, which were in the ship, into the sea, to lighten it of them: and Jonah had gone down to the sides of the ship, and lay, and slept a heavy sleep.

First we read here: they feared. So it usually happens that we begin to know God, whom we do not recognize nor invoke, in times of danger, and then at last we truly learn to pray from the heart. These men seemed not entirely impious, and to have some knowledge of truth, but they had not yet truly known God. For it is said, each one cried out to his god, when there ought to be one God of all. But they, as collected from various nations, each one was praying to his own god. From this it is easy to distinguish between true and false worship of God. Those who do not recognize the true God rightly fear.

HIS GOD.) Whom they had fashioned for themselves as God. They knew there was some divine power, by which man was helped, but they did not know the true God. And they do two things: first they invoke God, then they unload the ship. Thus they approach divine things, although through superstition, they do not omit, lest they tempt God. It would be vain to pray to God if there were some way of salvation left there, and to neglect it. This was human, to unload the ship, and even to throw out some precious things. For it would be presumption indeed to invoke God, and to neglect what God had granted you for salvation. Therefore he says, they threw out the vessels.

TO THE SIDES.) A frequent way of speaking singularly and plurally: it is necessary that he went down to one side. So we are accustomed at first, before we feel sin, to sleep and act securely, when we do not yet set before our eyes how great dangers we are liable to. Thus Jonah was secure, as if he could escape the wrath of God. And almost at that very hour when we think we are living most securely, we are in the greatest danger. Unless you have been reconciled to God, what can all creatures help you? Indeed if the Lord is with you, even if all creatures have attacked you, you are none the worse off. Therefore Jonah, as a sinner, outlines for us in himself the nature of sinners. He separates himself from others, with a bad conscience. Perhaps it was a sign of great sadness and sorrow, as we read about the Apostles, how their eyes were heavy with sleep. For the rest, insofar as he is a type of Christ, we know that he was of a very placid mind in the midst of dangers. For the Evangelist also shows us this

about Christ, that when a storm arose he slept in the ship in utmost quiet. Christ knew the will of the Father, and what things were to come upon him, therefore he was quiet in the greatest storm. But we read that the disciples cried out greatly and were troubled. And so it will be permissible for us to understand those things allegorically. The desires of the Prophets and Patriarchs were greatest, that they might be delivered from the storms of the world and of sins, which were threatening the human race. And those holy men not only gave their glory to God and cried out, but they by no means abandoned the very works which they did to promote God's glory. Finally, they let go of all things, that they might be unencumbered and ready to carry out the divine will.

6 And the master of the rope came to him, and said to him, Why are you in a heavy sleep? Arise, call upon your God, if perhaps God will deal with us (namely in mercy) and we do not perish.

In the worship of the impious this is wont to happen, when they do not trust enough in their own prayers: therefore to show their unworthiness, they also run to others, and thus they rouse Jonah, that he might also invoke his God, if perhaps he might be more propitious than their gods. The master of the ship, to whom the governance of the ship fell, now abandoned in utmost desperation, was leaving the helm, he runs to the holy man, although he had already sinned. Indeed in great dangers it is by no means permissible for us to sleep. And no time of this life is free from dangers, especially for those who are not established in the grace of God. Therefore he gives the best advice: Arise, saying, invoke your God. They did not yet dare to make him the author of such great danger, but they only somewhat conjectured this, that he had sinned, and they knew that God saves many at the prayers of the humble, and that this is divine mercy. I told you that the sailors are Prophets and Apostles in the allegorical sense, they admonish (as the disciples also exhorted Christ in the ship, that he should not sleep): let us pray to God through Christ with constant prayers, for his prayers alone are clean and sufficiently pure in the eyes of the Lord. Whence he is the only priest, who can calm the storm of all evils. He indeed bore the sinful nature in us, because of which the storm arose from us, that is, death, but he himself without sin. Therefore he could invoke God the Father, and for his reverence he was heard, as the Apostle has in Hebrews.

7 And they said each one to his neighbor, Come and let us cast lots, and we will know for whom this evil has happened to us: and they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah.

These men omitted nothing at all that pertained to calming the storm: for from certain conjectures they gathered that this sea storm was divinely sent. For it was not a common storm, nor had certain omens preceded, of which sailors are skilled. Whence they easily understood that the storm had happened because of sin, and that God was its author because of sin, and did not wish to leave it unpunished. Although they had thought nothing evil about Jonah, yet they conjectured that someone was present from some accursed race, whom God no longer wished to live. This came into their minds, and by some secret reason they could come to this, namely by lot, by which they discovered who was guilty. It is again permitted to see a mind not entirely wicked. We do not entirely disapprove of casting lots: we can use them in doubtful matters, when all human help is lacking, and when through them it is hoped to be able to come to the glory of God, since God is the mediator of all things, then lots of this kind cannot be disapproved in all ways. Thus the Apostles did, when they did not know which they should choose, they took counsel (Acts 2). So also we read about Achan. In all those things which are ambiguous, it is fitting to consider whether the glory of God is vindicated. The same rule is also to be observed in oaths. See to what end the oath looks, and use all diligence, that you may be free from sin. There are lots which look to vanity and curiosity, with which God is by no means to be tempted. For they, according to their reason, wanted to worship God, therefore they cast lots, and thus God also wanted to reveal the sin in Jonah. By lot, we understand the divine will, and it was manifested in Christ. Christ alone had to bear the sins of the people, so also the lot fell upon Christ.

Reading III.

God did not allow Jonah to lie hidden longer in his sin so secure, but first admonished him by sending a storm, and when he did not profit even so, then he manifested him by giving a lot, whence being caught he was in danger in a wonderful way. But because he was a man of God, he immediately came to his senses, and exhibited exceptional repentance. This which can be seen in all good men, who

sin either through weakness or through ignorance. For although they fall, yet they immediately rise again. Did not the crowing of the Rooster admonish Peter of his sin?

8 And they said to him: Tell us, I pray, for what cause this evil has happened, what is your work, and where did you come from, and what is your land, and of what people are you.

Although the sailors were Gentiles, and did not yet have correct knowledge of the true God, they were nevertheless endowed with singular mercy. And although they had cast lots, and the lot had fallen upon Jonah, a man of foreign religion and of more contemptible lot, yet they dealt kindly with him in all things, as much as was in them, and in all ways they testify that they do this with the most unwilling mind. They say,

TELL US.) The Prophet seemed not to be contemptible in their eyes, hence they act more cautiously, and first scrutinize everything, for they do not want to trust the lot alone, lest they condemn a man rashly. But because the lot fell upon Jonah, and he was caught as the author of the storm, they question him. I admonished above that that storm was not common, and that the sailors understood well enough that the storm was sent by a divine and singular cause. Tell us why we are thus afflicted, and what is your work, or what is your sin, that we may see what your cause is, perhaps we will hear the origin of this evil. We fear lest you come from some accursed people, therefore tell us what is your nation.

9 And he said to them, I am a Hebrew, and I fear the Lord, the ruler of heaven, who made the sea and the land.

The whole speech of Jonah is not described here, but from the following verse it is clear enough that he announced to them his iniquity, and exposed all his fortune. These seem to pertain more to the virtue and glory of Jonah, than to his confusion, since by his own mouth he himself was confessing his sin and deploring it. The sin of a Hebrew is more serious than that of a Gentile. I, since I am a Hebrew, and from my infancy educated in the worship of the true God, ought to have kept his commands more religiously than I did, I departed from the precept of my God, whence because of my disobedience this storm has come. Thus the Prophet casts the blame on himself, not on others, and confesses his sin with great exaggeration. He who does not acknowledge the excellent benefits of God,

and shows himself ungrateful, sins far more than any Gentiles. I have, he says, the faith of my fathers Abraham etc., which I have not embraced, although I have proceeded from that lineage. You know how holy a race the Jews are, with what privileges they are also endowed. It is certain, if I rightly worshiped the Lord, who created all things for the benefit of men, he would not permit me to be endangered thus, unless I had sinned gravely: which God showed the greatest miracles to the fathers in Egypt, leading them through the dry sea without any inconvenience, and submerging their enemies. I understand from my sins, how I have exasperated my God. For those words are words of repentance, that we also may learn to deplore our sins before God. The sin of a Christian man is much more serious than that of a Gentile, because he has been allotted greater grace.

10 And the men feared with great fear, and said to him, why have you done this? For the men knew that he was fleeing from the face of the Lord, because he had told them.

You see here that the previous speech is shortened and briefer, and it is necessary to understand far more. Who indicated to them, except that they understood from that speech: and when they understood that the Prophet was sent to the Ninevites, that they should repent, otherwise it would be overthrown, these men also thought indeed that they were sinners and idolaters, and therefore they feared for themselves. Thus in a way the Prophet and the sailors contend among themselves. Among all there is fear of God, and each fears that he has sinned more gravely, because the Prophet says, they feared with great fear to offend the good man, whom they had received into the ship: therefore they say,

WHY THIS.) Why have you thus neglected the Lord your God? This should bring great confusion to us, when we are rebuked by Gentiles, who throw our laziness in our face. For the Prophet ought to have rebuked them for their sins, now in turn he is rebuked by them. They say, You know that your God is powerful everywhere, and nevertheless you fled from his face, as if you could escape his command? And when you think such great things about your God, you have acted plainly unworthy of a good man, because you have not executed his command. They feared partly because of their own sins, partly because of Jonah's.

11 And they said to him, What shall we do to you, and the sea will be calm for us? for the sea was going and was stormy.

Since, O Jonah, you see that you have been caught because of your sins, and you are the author of this calamity, God opposes you, and demands punishments from you, what shall we do? We do not want to kill you, we desire to save your life: but we see the more we spare you, the more the sea rages; we see that the wrath of God also reaches even to us. And thus they declared their merciful mind. We learn that mercy is not to be denied even to those who are manifestly afflicted by God, although in all things the divine will is to be subscribed to, yet it is the will of the Lord, that we should not rejoice in their afflictions, even if they have justly deserved this. But I speak especially of those who repent such as Jonah. In what way shall we be able to save you and us, you indicate to us, since you seem to be of the number of the Prophets.

12 And he said to them, Take me up, and cast me into the sea, and the sea will be calm for you, for I know that because of me this great tempest is upon you.

Jonah answers: Throw me into the sea, since I have sinned, now I offer myself to death, lest because of my sins you also suffer something evil. Thus he offers himself willingly to death: in which matter he indicates that he is still a Prophet. If I am thrown out, you will be safe: with me safe, you will perish, because that tempest has come because of me. Now if we wish to speak about Christ, whom Jonah prefigures for us, we learn in Jonah's disobedience the obedience of Christ, as was also shown above. For Christ came first to the sheep which had perished of the house of Israel by the command of the Father, he did not want to go to the Gentiles, although the mind and will of the Father was that the Gentiles should be called, but it was necessary to preach repentance first to the Jews, and after the resurrection of Christ it was established by God that the Gentiles would come. Although there was no sin in Christ, he nevertheless had our sinful flesh, and he himself paid for what others had sinned, he paid what he had not taken away. For the lot fell upon him. For in Moses, by the scapegoat in the desert which bore the sins of the people, you know what is prefigured. Unless Christ had died, that tempest would by no means have ceased. It was predetermined by the Father that he should suffer for us. But it is diligently asked about the kind of this one, who he is: he confesses that he is a Hebrew. And Christ said this most rightly, because he was not only a Hebrew, but also the Lord of heaven and earth himself. We cannot ascribe sin to Christ, but he bore the punishment of sin. By a certain figurative

speech we may recognize this in the Jewish people, how it happened. For there were not lacking to that people some holy men, who also deplored the death of Christ, but it was the will of the Father. Just as Jonah offered himself, so Christ was offered, because he so willed. When the Jews wanted to seize him, going out to meet them, he said, If you seek me, let these go. And in that was fulfilled: Take me up. By the sea let us understand the passion itself. Christ says, I am ready to die, that the people may be saved. This sentence also of Caiaphas it is better that one should die than that the whole nation should perish.

13 And the men labored to return to dry land, and they could not, because the sea rose and stirred up waves against them.

See again the mercy of these men: although the Prophet, repenting, gave himself into their hands, and urged them to throw him into the sea, nevertheless they thought how they might be able to free him, even though safety could not be established for them by any other means, except by submerging Jonah. Nor is there any other salvation for us except through Christ.

14 And they cried out to the Lord, and said, O Lord, we beseech you, let us not perish for this man's life, and do not lay upon us innocent blood, for you, O Lord, have done as you willed.

You see again the mercy of these men, how unwillingly they undertake this deed: they pray to the Lord not to impute this to them as sin. The Jews acted quite differently: they cried out, "His blood be on us and on our children." To Peter some Jews said, "What shall we do to be saved?" For it is certain that most sinned through ignorance and not through malice, whose hearts the Lord knows. They say, while we submerge this man, we do not do this willingly; necessity compels us. Why innocent blood? Because he had not sinned against them, and had brought no evil upon them.

YOU HAVE DONE.) As it pleased you: we see these things happen by your ordination, as you decreed that this man should be punished. You urge and compel us that we are forced to cast this man out of the ship, therefore do not impute this to us as sin. Christ also prayed for the people, saying that they did not know what they were doing. For thus the Father from eternity determined to make the human race safe.

15 And they took up Jonah, and cast him into the sea, and the sea stood still from its tempest.

Since the sea did not cease from its rage, and the Prophet willingly gave himself up with fear of God, he was thrown out, and immediately the sea ceased from its tempest. There a miracle appeared, and Jonah's sin was sufficiently uncovered. Therefore they knew that God was placated to them, and this was not imputed to them as sin. Then let us consider in the death of Christ that the sea is placated for us, death is conquered, and the penalty is paid, which we all ought to have borne.

Reading 4.

We heard at the end of the previous reading how unwillingly the sailors threw the holy man into the sea: where among other things it is also permitted to observe the virtue of hospitality, that we should not easily betray those whom we have received as entrusted in good faith, nor inconvenience them when we have suffered no injuries. If these Gentiles, placed in such great dangers, and almost certain that Jonah was the author of such great evils, feared to lay hands on him, how much more should we Christians by no means neglect this? Although as I indicated recently, it is permitted to know other mysteries from this, how all the pious grieve that they were, by their sin, the authors of Christ's death. Others also observe this, how the Apostles tried to draw Christ back lest he should die, whence Peter says: "Lord, be merciful to yourself." And Thomas: "Let us go again into Galilee": Thus the voices of the Apostles harmonize with the voices of the sailors.

16 And the men feared the Lord with great fear, and offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows.

Having seen this miracle, namely the casting out of Jonah, and that the sea was made calm, they immediately recognized that the true God was he whom Jonah had preached: whence it says they feared the Lord. Above we read that they feared with great fear, but he had not yet added the Lord, as in this place. Now, having rejected their idols, they turned to the true Lord, as being powerful everywhere. They not only feared but also declared their gratitude with sacrifices. See here that the name Lord (יהוה) is placed. Now no longer held by false gods, but they sacrifice to the true God.

THEY MADE VOWS.) That is, they made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, that they might offer some gifts there to the true God in testimony of the salvation granted to them, doubtless by this means about to proclaim these miracles, which had been done in the sea, how Jonah was cast out because of

his disobedience. And thus God dispenses in a wonderful way, that his miracles are greatly celebrated: for he does not want these things to be kept in secret. For the rest, it is not necessary that we admonish much here about sacrifices, since that occurs so often in the Scriptures. You know what the ancients once attributed to sacrifices, they would have been plainly foolish, if they had thought themselves grateful to God by the blood of cattle, when God required far other things. But under the sacrifices, it was granted to the first fathers to know that another redemption was to be expected. Finally, vows of this kind are now not at all necessary: God seeks other things, namely that we should do good to our neighbor and consecrate ourselves wholly to God.

17 And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Again another miracle occurs, inferior to none that we have in Scripture, and by no means difficult for God: which if anyone should shrink from believing, by the same reasoning he will easily recoil from all others. For it is permitted to see in this, how great is the power of God, and with how great providence he guards his own. Although he permits the pious according to his justice to fall into various temptations and tribulations, yet he does not remove his mercy from them, and he guards those who are troubled. For this reason that example will profit to confirm patience, and to establish our hope. When Jonah had now been thrown into the sea, soon a whale appeared, by which he is swallowed (Gen. 1), we have that great whales were created by God, such beasts as are in the more remote Ocean. But it was done by divine ordination, that now that great whale was present with horrible jaws to receive the Prophet. Already before the sea had terrified, which raged much by itself, now no less does this great fish terrify, which has horrible rows of teeth. It is permitted to conjecture from this, that it preserved the Prophet whole in its bowels, how great a beast it was. The Prophet had to pass through the teeth, and through the throat. Then it is permitted to think, what uncleanness, what darkness, narrowness, motions, agitations he endured in the belly of the whale, so that plainly this holy man was subjected to the greatest torments. See how he washed away his disobedience with so many difficulties. But God wanted by this example doubtless to remind us, that in those things which pertain to the salvation of our neighbor, we should by no means be slow and negligent.

TO SWALLOW UP.) He does not say, to receive, but to swallow up, so that the Prophet expected nothing else than that he would be digested in the bowels, and converted into the nature of the fish. Dangers appear clearly before the eyes of us all perpetually: but salvation itself and how great rewards we expect, do not so revolve before our eyes, and are almost hidden from us. This three-day period is thought to be a small time, but to be in such great calamities and hardships altogether represents very many years, especially when we think how this fish passed through great spaces of the sea in a short time. Josephus in *Antiquities* Book 9, chapter 9, narrates how the ship passed into Cilicia, and says that Jonah was vomited out on the shore of the Euxine Sea. Now those who see how the seas are connected, will find that this whale almost passed through the Aegean Sea, the Bosphorus, the Propontis and many tracts of sea. I recount these things for this reason: that you may think in what great tribulations this holy man was while existing in the fish. When we find these motions in ships, more severe for those who are less accustomed, let each one conjecture with himself, what great evils the Prophet bore. What else could he think, than that he must perish? Although he knew God, yet no hope of salvation occurred, when he saw the dangers. This is the place to which the Lord looked in Matthew 12. For as, he says, Jonah was in the belly of the whale three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights. Here in the belly of the whale, in the Gospel, in the heart of the earth. Not that Christ lay in the sepulcher for three whole days and three nights. By synecdoche, when we take a part for the whole, we say he was in the sepulcher for three days and nights. It was necessary for Christ to approve his death perfectly. Although buried for three days, so that he rested in the sepulcher for part of Friday and Saturday and part of the following night, yet there were still some who denied that Christ had truly suffered. If this were true, then it would be over for our salvation. The Jews had well understood that saying, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up": and they also repeated it before Pilate, remembering that saying. Whence it was necessary that Christ should not defer the resurrection further. And from there our resurrection received its confirmation, that we should not doubt that we will rise again. By this example we will also be able to console ourselves in other adversities. For although we have come to such dangers in the greatest adversities that we despair of salvation: nevertheless let us hold it for certain that the Lord's

hands are not shortened. So almost all the ancients in their prayers used examples of this kind. He who snatched Daniel from the den of lions, who freed the boys from the fiery furnace, who preserved Jonah in the belly of the whale, will also not desert us. And especially with the sick, if they have been moderately instructed, this example will have its power.

Chapter 2.

1 And Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the belly of the fish.

It is not obscure that Jonah was placed in the greatest dangers, so that he could scarcely collect his senses, nevertheless his spirit was in some way intent on God. And although this prayer was written afterwards, yet we believe that he himself is an example of patience worthy of mention when we are in the greatest adversities. That Jonah prayed, namely in spirit, although troubled in himself, should admonish us to pray perpetually. Nor should our hope succumb because various storms arise. But I am not of the opinion of those who think that prayer was entirely fabricated after he was freed: for he expressly added, In the bowels while he was still there; because after that he adds, He vomited, as if from the depths; when he was still in the belly of the fish, yet he saw that he had escaped dangers. He who remained unharmed from the sea, from the teeth of the fish, unharmed in that uncleanness of the bowels, was indeed easily comforted in the Lord, even when he suffered the gravest things, that the Lord would by no means withdraw his hand, but would have mercy. Thus we shall by no means say that he did not pray: indeed the Spirit wants to commend this especially to us, that the more we are afflicted, the more we should run to God, pouring out prayers from the heart. The Spirit seems in some way to give the salvation of the Prophet to the virtue of prayer, although God had long ago determined with himself that he wanted to glorify this Prophet with such a miracle, nevertheless Scripture speaks thus, that it may arouse us to prayer. Christ now crucified and immolated in some way the highest Priest himself was heard for his reverence. He prayed for those crucifying him, and commended his Spirit into the hands of the Father. Then Christ was in the heart of the earth, and as far as his body is concerned, he lay in the sepulcher. But what place Christ's soul held, is not very uncertain since he promised the thief that he would be in paradise that day.

2 And he said, I called out of my affliction to the Lord, and he answered me: Out of the belly of hell I cried, and you heard my voice.

In this prayer two things are repeatedly mentioned: namely the great misery of the Prophet, which compelled him to cry out to the Lord. Then divine mercy, which did not despise one so oppressed. These things, I say, are repeatedly mentioned, and almost consume the perfect prayer, that we may rightly humble ourselves while praying, and attribute praise and glory to God. We must pray with humility, with great hope and confidence. For unless we believe that we are to be freed by God, and that our prayers are to be heard, we shall pray in vain. James says in his Epistle that we must not waver in prayers. Therefore the Prophet says, I cried out long ago and now I cry out. This is not rare in songs and poems: not that the Prophet composed a poem, but he cried out and repeatedly felt divine grace. I did not turn to anyone else than to the true God, nor did I despise him, although I was in the greatest tribulations. Others to whom God is not so dear to the heart, would have said, Behold the Lord is he who has thrown me into this misery, I experience him plainly angry, why should I cry out to him, since he himself is afflicting me? But the pious think and speak far otherwise.

HE ANSWERED.) For God to answer is to show himself kind. Others have translated, He heard me. He calls the belly of the fish the Belly. Likewise it is not for us to imagine the place of hell, and how souls are punished: Scripture is accustomed to call lower places thus, as sepulchers, as the belly of the fish. He says, With many feelings I indicated to what depth of evils I had come: therefore by my example let all turn to God, and by no means despair that he will be merciful.

Reading 5.

From the examples of the Saints we learn not only how our life should be instituted, but also how we should pray, and with what patience adverse things should be borne, lest we fail in spirit. For we find all the elect afflicted in various ways in this world, whether they are being tested, or so that they may wipe away the filth which they have drawn through human weakness. And so our Prophet experienced all these things: he was thrown into the sea, swallowed by a whale, and remained for three days in the belly of the whale. And although he suffered most grievously there, nevertheless he

preserved his trust in God. Therefore, that such prayers may become useful to us, it is fitting that we also humble our souls. For if anyone contemplates their sinful life, and how one acts in the body of this death, they will have sufficient abundant material for weeping, and will know how many evils they bear in this prison of the body, they will also find themselves no less afflicted than those. The Apostle also thus deplores himself to the Romans. And if we are not altogether equal in tribulations to Job or David themselves, nevertheless each one has their own overflowing sea of tribulations. The Psalms do not taste sweet to us because of this, because we are not known to ourselves, otherwise we would pray all the Psalms with greater fruit. For it is permitted to see in most of them, how the Prophet groans as if he descends to hell, just as Jonah, who in the cross and adversity promises himself divine benevolence; and this he does in almost every verse.

*3 And you cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the flood surrounded me, all your waves
and your billows passed over me.*

Since the lot of the Lord had caught Jonah, and the will of the Lord had stirred up that tempest, therefore he attributes this whole thing, which had been done with him, to God. While he was therefore in the internal organs of the great fish, he was in the heart of the seas. It seems to me that he said this in the plural not without reason, because that whale crossed many seas, the Syrian sea near Joppa, and the Cilician near Tarsus, then the Aegean, then the Propontis, and even reached the Euxine. That is, I was in many seas, so to speak. Although all these seas are contiguous, nevertheless they are allotted various names from the neighboring regions. And he calls the ocean itself a river, but not properly, since all rivers enter into the sea; the Prophet also felt the force of rivers, when the whales were near the shores, and he was swimming where rivers enter the sea. Although he says one river in the singular, nevertheless it is very frequent in Scripture, that the plural is indicated by the singular, as, the fly in Egypt, that is, a multitude of flies, etc. I was tossed about in all the waves and storms of the sea. Others who suffer shipwrecks are endangered in the sea, or are suffocated more quickly, but I have experienced very many waves. And thus he asserts that he was wonderfully tested, so that he himself, being spiritual, usefully says these prayers. If we have recognized how deep sin is, what punishments these also deserve, and while we recognize that we have incurred the wrath of God, we weep equally as

if placed in the middle of the sea. Such a thing it is to be cast into the deep, that is, to be engaged in crimes, where we have not yet been reconciled through the Gospel, through faith, where the conscience is not rightly healed, there the soul has its hell.

4 And I said, I am cast out from your eyes, yet I will continue to pray toward the temple of your holiness.

I was overwhelmed by such great waves, that I plainly say to myself, I am cast away, that is, all things were driving me to despair, nothing occurred by which I could console myself, I saw you God and all things opposing me. For sometimes God is accustomed to send this most severe temptation for a certain time to His elect, so that because of their sins they think God is perpetually angry, yet they are recalled in their own time through the Spirit of God, who restores them. Plainly whenever we look at sin itself, also at the frailty and evils, in which we are immersed because of our offenses, what else shall we say than that we are cast out? This is accustomed to happen in all difficulties, so that nothing is present by which we may take hope, unless God Himself consoles us. But when God withdraws His grace and sweetness from us, it seems to us that we are driven from His eyes. In Psalm 12, nearly the same sentiment is held. How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? etc. This is also frequent in the Prophets. These things are said about the magnitude of tribulations, now he adds the hope and confidence, which the Prophet receives from God.

THAT I MAY PRAY.) That is, nevertheless I will pray toward the Temple. The Hebrews say, toward heaven, in which your holy dwelling is. Others in Jerusalem toward the Temple. In the belly of the fish he could not do this conveniently, but rather he saw into heaven with mental eyes. I do not reject, if you understand this place as toward the Temple of Jerusalem. And Daniel, stationed in Babylon, prayed toward the Temple. We look to Christ, through whom we are heard. Therefore he says, Although I am overwhelmed by such great waves, nevertheless I still have hope in my God. Again he repeats the same sentiment: first he puts the magnitude of tribulations, then again he returns to prayers.

5 The waters surrounded me even to the soul, the deep encompassed me, seaweed was bound about my head.

6 I went down to the lowest parts of the mountains, the earth with her bars was about me forever, yet you will bring up my life from corruption, O Lord my God.

Here he calls tribulations waters, otherwise we call all adversities by the name of waters. David says, Save me, O Lord, for the waters have come in even to my soul. But that was fulfilled in this place in reality, when Jonah was in the middle of the sea, and with those waters he also felt other tribulations. As if he says: I was very little short of perishing entirely, of my life along with my soul going to ruin. You see how many times he says the same thing?

THE DEEP.) Not only was I engaged in waters, but I also passed into the depth of waters, I even descended into the very depth of the sea. In the depths of rivers and the sea are found seaweeds and certain herbs, in which fish sometimes hide. So also that whale hid itself in the seaweeds. Therefore with the fish hidden, the Prophet was also hidden, when with his head he played in the seaweeds. Hence the Red Sea has its name, because in it is very much seaweed. Some of the Hebrews say that this whale entered into the Red Sea, but there is no passage from the Syrian sea into the Red Sea, therefore they are mistaken. For mountains and a great part of Egypt divides the Red Sea from Judea: unless it had circled all of Africa. What he says, I wrapped my head, implies that he was engaged in the lowest part of the sea.

LOWEST PARTS.) To the feet of the mountains. The highest mountains, which are near the sea, altogether extend their feet into the sea: however high and deep it may be, nevertheless land is beneath, and sometimes steep mountains, which are adjacent to the sea. He wants to say, I descended to the steep and lowest parts of the mountains. That is, I could not promise myself a return to land, for the land had so opposed itself with its shores, that even if the fish had vomited me out, I could by no means have ascended. Sailors cannot land on all banks; and in these places it is said to oppose its restraints and bars, so that one cannot go out. Moreover from what part an exit was to be hoped for, there were mountain cliffs and steep places, so that there it would not have been permitted to swim out, if he had been freed from the whale. Thus those who rightly consider with themselves the anguish of the soul, can explain those with the same magnificent words. You will find nearly the same things in

Job and the Psalms. Now when he has set forth his calamity, again he brings a word of confidence and hope.

AND YOU WILL BRING UP.) You are the Lord my God in these highest dangers; although all creatures deny me hope, but to you God nothing is impossible, you will preserve my life from corruption. And now he begins to hope more in the kindness of God.

*7 When my soul was fainting within me, I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came to you, to the
Palace of your holiness.*

When, therefore, my soul was thus fainting within me, it was entirely over for me, I had no other refuge, except that one; that I would remember God, and cry out to God, crying out, Lord you have not excluded my prayer, although I was the most miserable of all.

*8 Those who observe vanity and nothingness, will forsake their mercy.
9 But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you, what I have vowed I will pay, salvation is of the
Lord.*

They explain the first verse in various ways. Some say that he speaks of idolaters. Those who do not acknowledge the true God, and are addicted to idols, they certainly can promise themselves nothing. For although you are truly merciful, O Lord, they nevertheless forsake that mercy of yours, which would be granted to them, if they sought you with a true heart, and they do not invoke you, but I know you, and I invoke you. That exposition would be plain enough, but when I inspect the interpreters of the Hebrews, I find it said about the sailors, and again in a double sense. Some because he did not turn to the Lord, they translated, foolishness because חסד signifies both mercy and foolishness. They say, those who were endangered in ships, moderated the ropes in vain, they forsake their idols now enlightened by me. But the first exposition pleases me more, so that you think nothing of the sailors, and he speaks in general about all sinners. I will sacrifice the sacrifice of praise. True vows are to acknowledge benefits granted to oneself. I will be saved from nowhere else, except through God.

We have heard how much the Prophet was endangered, now we may see in a few words how the Lord liberated him.

10 And the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.

God's speaking is commanding, just as we have in the beginning of Genesis, God said, Let there be light, and there was light. Thus God speaks to all creatures, so that by His word and command all things serve. Therefore to whom it pleased before, that the depths should devour Jonah, it pleased the same that he should be freed. Nothing of such things happens by chance, otherwise unless he had been preserved in the fish in a wonderful way, he would have been digested by natural heat, like other food; but he was preserved by God, not without mystery, until the third day. Thus the fish obeys. Josephus says that Jonah was vomited out into the Euxine Sea. And this salvation of Jonah, and resurrection of Christ in type, as he was restored to dry land, that is, to earth, escaping the dangers of the sea and the fish, so Christ rising from death, was made superior to death, now he dies no more. It indicates that we too will someday be freed, however great tribulations now press upon us; the Lord will certainly free His own at an opportune time. To some He prescribes a longer time, to others a shorter time of liberation or death, as will have been useful to each. After Jonah was freed from the fish, he again received a command from God, to preach to the Ninevites, which he accomplishes with the highest speed and obedience. And again a mystery not to be despised occurs. For just as he, when he had risen, preached and converted the Ninevites; so the Gentiles, to whom before it was not given to have knowledge of the true God, after the resurrection of Christ, the Holy Spirit having been sent, were converted by the Apostles (Matt. 12). Christ especially looked to this, that the Jews were to be left, and those who were from the Gentiles were to be taken up.

Chapter 3.

1 And the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time, saying.

Although the Prophet, having been admonished before, had received the command to preach to the Ninevites, because however he had, as it were, fled from the hand of the Lord, he does not now rush forth by himself to preach, but he awaits the command of the Lord; by whose example we are

sufficiently admonished, lest trusting in our own reason we rashly rush to preach without being sent. For if we shall have been disobedient in the beginning, and shall have gone to preach without being admonished again by the Lord, it can happen that we may do this office unworthily and with danger. We have an example of this thing in the sons of Israel, who refused when ordered to fight against the Amalekites. Then when they had decided to fight by their own impulse, it turned out less successfully. So if we shall have neglected the command of the Lord, it will also happen to us. Certainly we will achieve little benefit, if we rush into the office of preaching, when it will seem opportune to us, without the admonition of God, with no necessity demanding, and not sufficiently certain that what we are doing pleases the Lord.

2 Arise, go to Nineveh, the great city, and preach against it the preaching that I shall speak to you.

Before, I chose you to preach to the Ninevites, but you fled, you were about to sail to Tarshish; certainly you paid the penalty of disobedience. Now again I call you, that you may go to that city, and preach there those things which I shall tell you. Above you had what he ought to preach, that their wickedness has ascended before God. Again to consider the difficulty of the province, how great a task had been enjoined upon him: to announce the word of the Lord to so great a kingdom, to such great princes, so wicked, who hitherto had not had Prophets so familiar, it was not without danger, but since it was the command of the Lord, it had to be obeyed altogether. Cry out that your word may be heard, see that you add nothing of your own, see that you take away nothing from those things which I shall suggest to you. Let him who speaks speak the words of God. Let him who has a dream, speak a dream; let him who has the word of God, speak the word of God. Perhaps the things which I command you will seem hard enough to you; beware lest you change anything from my words. Thus the task of preaching is enjoined upon us, that in all things we may show ourselves servants of the Lord. A servant does nothing except what the Lord prescribes.

3 And Jonah arose and went to Nineveh according to the word of the Lord, and Nineveh was a great city of God, a journey of three days.

See how much tribulation and the cross profited Jonah: God makes him obedient from disobedient, and he who before had fled, now soon arises, not expecting any longer such a punishment.

By the nearest way, by which one goes to Assyria (some from Judea, some from the Euxine Sea) he set out, and soon when he was vomited out by the fish he went. It can be that he received a command, like another Prophet, that he should not delay or eat on the journey. He did not go to his own people at first, but to the Ninevites.

GREAT OF GOD.) Some explain city of God, in which there were not idolaters, although they were liable to other grave crimes, robberies, unmercifulnesses, injustices, by which neighbors are more afflicted. For that kind of sin is most hateful to God, because He especially hates the oppression of the poor. The cry of this sin ascends to heaven. Others take אֱלֹהִים, as in very many other places, where Scripture speaks of great things, also here: we say cedar of God, mountain of God, flame of God: so in this place. As if he says, it was an exceedingly great city. Also in the German language there is such a manner of speaking. But it can be that the Prophet looked to this, that God deigned to visit this city with singular care. That city of God was ample and very great, namely a journey of three days. Here some want the walls of the same city to have been extended to such a space, but I would not dare to accede to their opinion. For it is sometimes accustomed to happen, that in fertile lands adjacent villages are reckoned with cities, which are adjacent in some field, even if not all those houses are surrounded by the walls of the city. For it would be an almost prodigious size of this city. In Egypt and Assyria there are very fertile fields, and there can be contiguous habitations, which easily hear the command of the King, as in the field of Tigurinus more houses are seen, which also have the right of the city, although they are not enclosed by walls. But there is no danger, whether you believe or not, that it was built with such ample walls. For about Babylon they hand down a wonderful size of walls, and even now in the East there are cities of wonderful size. It is an indication that it was a great city, and had a royal seat among Eastern cities most famous and ancient.

4 And Jonah began to enter into the city, walking one day's journey, and he cried out and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

Josephus translates this and says: This is a short time, in which the kingdom of the Assyrians is to be destroyed. And the Hebrews say, that it was similarly said, Nineveh was to expect the same judgment at that time which once Sodom and Gomorrah did, which perished by heavenly fire. It is

certain, although they then escaped through repentance made, yet after some years the same city was destroyed, and also the kingdom of the Assyrians was transferred to the Babylonians, where the descendants, having neglected similar repentance, relapsed into their former iniquity. Therefore, he says, there is a certain time prescribed by God, within which time Nineveh will be overthrown. He does not predict salvation for them through repentance, but pronounces very harsh things to them. Nor is it to be thought that Jonah spoke nothing else than these four words. But in these words is contained the sum of the preaching, just as if someone should say, he preached about divine mercy, or omnipotence. It is certain that those who preach about that use other words. So also Jonah foretold to them their exile, he objects to their sins by divine command, in which the city was stained. Nor was this preaching rash, as of certain ones in our times, who are endowed with a fanatical spirit, they cry out, as if certain cities are soon to be destroyed. Nor should we think that John the Baptist said nothing but “Repent”: indeed he brought forth all things opportunely and eloquently, which would allure men to repentance, he unraveled crimes, and set forth the mercy of God. For the Evangelists have not everywhere embraced those long orations. So here we believe that Jonah by divine precept omitted nothing, which pertains to the preaching of repentance. The Hebrews say those sailors, who had been with Jonah in the ship, were Assyrians, and then they recognized that Jonah, and they also confirmed the sentence. But let us allow it to be a Jewish tradition. We say rightly that the Gentiles are a great city of God. The Word of God was sent to the Gentiles, that they also might receive salvation. The time of this life is the time of repentance: if we shall have received faith through Christ, we can be saved; if not, after forty days have elapsed, that is, if the time of this life shall have passed, there will be no salvation, but mere condemnation.

5 And the men of Nineveh believed in God, and they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth from the greatest of them even to the least of them.

You see here the fruit of the word of God in those who are sent by the Lord: the men of Nineveh believed. This is written in reproach of the Jewish nation, to whom there were so many Prophets, so many miracles, daily exhortations, temple, laws, sacrifices, etc., but they were always stiff-necked, and few of them believed. But the Gentiles who did not trust in their own works

immediately embraced faith, which indeed happened by divine judgment. Which the Apostle most clearly pursues to the Romans. They believed Jonah, although a foreign man, perhaps derided by others, but these were not deterred by his simplicity, certain that God himself was thus speaking to them.

THEY PROCLAIMED.) These are symbols of repentance, they fasted clothed in rougher and harsher garments. There is no need for us to urge greatly here how much they fasted. For it is the custom of Scripture to speak thus of sacks and fasts. Otherwise the Assyrian race is dressed delicately: they therefore laid aside more delicate garments and cast away other luxuries. They indicated the repentance of their mind by certain external signs: where there is such great fervor of mind, it is no wonder if all delights no longer taste good. The bitterness of mind does not allow one to desire any longer to be delighted by these delights, for they see as it were before their eyes death and life. And because all sinned, all also repented. This is truly the greatest work, that so great a city should change its ways by the preaching of one man.

Reading 7.

There are those who in the Prophet Jonah chiefly attend to this one thing, how the Ninevites did penance, looking at certain works, and they treat penance less skillfully. For when true penance is conversion from evil ways, they defined penance by certain satisfactory works, prejudging faith, and the glory of God. For they did not know what penance was. For in the New Testament, when John preached penance, we have the saying, "Bring forth fruits worthy of penance": which looks more to repentance, than to other more austere works, by which some sometimes afflict themselves without great utility. Bodily exercise is of little use, as the Apostle has it, much more is required contrition of mind, a heart plainly renewed. Although they themselves also put that contrition, yet they attributed it to our own strength as if we ourselves could placate God's anger by those external works, when that true sacrifice proceeds chiefly from the Spirit of God.

6 And the matter came to the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and laid his robe from him, and was clothed with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.

So it is usually accustomed to happen, that common people first hear the word of God, and it comes more slowly to the ears of Kings. So it happened when Christ and John were teaching. This whole matter of Jonah came to the King. The meekness of this King is worthy of observation. Those who have read the histories of the ancients, find among the kings of the Assyrians wonderful cruelty, and how delicately they were nourished among the highest flatteries: whence it is plainly wonderful, that he did not burn out against the Prophet, and it is wonderful that he was not immediately ordered to be dragged to punishment. But it was undoubtedly the work of the Lord and the power of the divine Word, that the pride of the Jews might be confounded, who, educated among Prophets, nevertheless never became better, and always persisted in their obstinate purpose. The King was terrified by the magnitude of the message. But three things are said, which could nearly terrify them: the magnitude of the crime, that their wickedness ascended to heaven, then that there was a short time for repentance, for forty days were prescribed. Thirdly, they were also gravely admonished by the punishments themselves. For Jonah did not only threaten punishment, but also overthrow such as once of the Sodomites. Therefore the King arose terrified from that preaching, and he himself also declared the sorrow of his internal mind by external signs: namely by tearing his more precious garments, for the Assyrians are accustomed to be clothed in silks, the Kings especially in purple, whose luxury is the highest.

WAS WITH SACKCLOTH.) That is, he was clothed with a rougher garment, he cast away all luxury, and so sat in dust, and chose the lowest place; he who before was over all, now almost subjected himself to all, while he sits in ashes. For the Prophets have described to us the highest humility almost in these words. Although I am not unaware that notable foreign writers also describe the penance of the ancients in such a way. Plutarch indicates that some were accustomed to be engaged in mud, signifying by this the huge sorrow of the mind. And so by those external symbols they declared great humility of mind, although the Prophets did not require such things. The mind of God is that we should think humbly of ourselves, thinking that we are dust born from earth, to be turned into earth.

7 And he proclaimed and said in Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying: Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; let them not feed, nor drink water.

Much depends on the examples and virtues of kings, for they can promote the glory of God above others, as is read in Daniel about Nebuchadnezzar, Darius, and Cyrus, who made laws about worshiping the true God of the Jews. Thus this King by his example also easily brought others, who did not yet have a mind for repentance. Moreover, these kings had very obedient peoples, and their laws were held sacred, as we read in Daniel, whence their empires were also more stable. It is wonderful that the king's counselors did not contradict when that command was promulgated from the mouth and mind of the King, as this kind of men is accustomed to weary the ears of princes, saying that these things are plainly against royal majesty, to humble oneself thus, and to fear the voice of a man. But here the consensus of all appears, and nothing of the sort is heard.

MAN AND BEAST.) בָּקָר from large cattle, such as cows, donkeys, horses, oxen; thus צֹאן to sheep, goats etc. Whatever animals serve human use, they want to be humbled by some chastisement, since the Assyrians were somewhat proud even in their beasts. We see in the most sumptuous cities, those who sometimes cover mules and horses with purple and gold. Then they also fatten sheep and oxen, that they may live more luxuriously. It is not altogether without reason, if penance was propagated even to this extent, that that King who before had a horse covered with purple, now goes in black clothing. Horses somewhat more lustful, with food withdrawn become leaner. In sum, they indicated to us in these things the greatest sadness of mind. We know otherwise that these animals were also created for man's use: hence it happened that in the flood they perished together with man, yet with certain seeds preserved in Noah's ark. Not unjustly therefore they also display a certain sorrow. Nor am I unaware that others bring certain allegories and by man understand those who are endowed with wisdom above others, by cattle those who are more uncultured, and not much superior in intellect to the cattle themselves, so that that command pertains to every kind of men, both to the wise and foolish. We accept the simple sense of the history. For it says plainly enough, Man and beast. It is sometimes accustomed to happen, if men are placed in bitterness of mind, that they forget all things, neither does food taste good to them, nor do they care to feed their cattle. So also these, with the command placed, truly and without simulation declared that they repent. Nor was that fast of 40 days,

which neither men nor cattle could have borne, but altogether a certain highest frugality and fasting is shown.

8 And let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands.

As I said about beasts, which are sometimes clothed even with more sumptuous coverings, so here man and beast are clothed with sackcloth. What does it matter for beasts to be clothed with sackcloth, unless this was done for man's sake? It can happen that a house is adorned with black tapestries, so that man may be provoked to sadness. For the same reason also fasting is proclaimed for beasts. But if you wish to respond to those who attribute too much to works, and thus making much of rougher clothing and thinner food, you will reply in such a manner. Before God the sackcloth with which men were clothed was worth no more than that with which beasts were. Will this move God, if a beast and we are clothed more roughly? By no means.

THEY CRIED.) This can be referred to man, but it is not ineptly said "man and beast" (מִן הָאָדָם וּמִן הַבְּהֵמָה). That abstinence by itself is in place of a cry. So we say about alms that it cries to God. Although you have not alleged your alms before God, mercy itself by itself cries to God. In a figurative manner of speaking even cattle can be understood to have cried. Mightily, that is, without pretense. They were not so lukewarm, as those who repent in such a way that today they bewail their sins, tomorrow they return to the same. They therefore cried to God with their whole heart, that you may see in what true repentance consists, which all the Prophets declare. Before they were evil robbers, they had done violence to the poor, whether through usury, or by some other tyranny. We perform holy penance, if from proud we become humble, from wrathful gentle, and from lustful pure and continent, and thus having left vices we embrace virtues. Therefore they turned from their evil custom, in which they were accustomed to walk. They were caught to be most violent robbers, and the afflicted conscience dictated this. Robbery is done not only by hand, but also by other deceit and fraud. You can change the future into the past and say, And let them cry mightily and let them turn etc. so that it may pertain to the king's command, to which the following verse coheres. Although the Prophet had

promised no mercy of God, yet the King himself alleges divine mercy, and because of it exhorts all to repentance.

9 Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?

Whether you attribute this voice to the king, or commonly to the people, that they thus humbled themselves, you will not err from the mind of the Prophet. But he seems to speak doubtingly, when he says, who knows. But in exhortations sometimes even doubt is very effective, that sloth may be more rejected, and greater alacrity may be assumed. Moreover, there is a struggle and conflict in us before we know the Gospel, and before we are made more certain of the Spirit of God. Who will sufficiently weigh that hesitation of mind? Although truly those Ninevites were not without confidence: unless they had hope, they would by no means have humbled themselves to God. They want to say, perhaps God will by no means deny this to us, nor is his sentence such, which he has decreed, that he wishes to execute it. If we shall have persisted, then he will proceed against us; but if we shall have come to our senses, and desisted from sins, surely then he will cease from fury. Plainly as long as we live here, there is a place for mercy, if we shall have ceased from sins. And after the completed days of this life, there will no longer be a place for repentance.

Reading 8.

10 And God saw their works, and they turned back from their evil way, and God was led to repentance over the evil, which He had spoken to do to them, and He did not do it.

In these words we do not say God was changeable, nor do we ascribe anything unworthy to God, as if He now begins to know what He had not foreknown. For He knew the Ninevites would do penance, and He roused the Prophet for the condemnation of the Israelites. Therefore they explain that “He saw”. He saw, that is, God made known that He approves their works. Although I wish it to be understood simply, as in Genesis 1: God saw that the light was good, so that God’s seeing is approving. Thus in this place God saw their works. Here those who attribute more to works than is fitting also want to attribute sanctity and salvation to works. But if they would consider Peter’s saying, that the heart is purified by faith, and in Romans and Galatians that we are justified by faith, not by

works, they would easily recognize that the Prophet by no means looks to this, as if he so approves works that salvation should be attributed to them. God approved those things which flowed from exceptional faith. For God did not greatly esteem that fasting and garments of rough clothes. But He himself declares this to be the intention sufficiently when He says, Because they are converted. Therefore conversion from the evil way, and renewal of life is what God especially approves. Now renewal is from the Holy Spirit, who makes man begin to hate what he previously loved beyond measure. Evil here signifies calamity, as we have in the Gospel of Matthew: Sufficient for the day is its evil. We read something similar about Ahab, who himself did penance. For such are the divine threats which the Lord threatens, and they are conditional, and the meaning is, Unless man does penance etc., as appears in Ezekiel 18. If man does penance, the Lord also changes His sentence.

Chapter 4.

1 And it displeased Jonah with great evil, and it was kindled to him (heart or fury).

The Prophet undoubtedly understood what the Ninevites had achieved with God by their penance, for they had placated the benign God. Now 40 days had passed, or the end was at hand, and God was not overthrowing the city, having become propitious to the people. This undoubtedly Jonah understood would happen for the condemnation of the people of Israel who were about to hear very badly, because for so long time the Prophets had labored and never been able to provoke the people to penance, so much had all the Prophets' labor perished. This was now about to be a disgrace for Israel, and this was biting the Prophet's mind. He did not so much grieve that they were doing penance and escaping punishment, as he grieved that the people of Israel were thus being rejected. Therefore to some extent this grief was right, and mixed with piety: although it is not fitting for us to be angry when we are certain that something pleases God. Thus the Hebrews and most of our people explain, because the people of the Israelites were so hardened and negligent of their salvation, that they never came to their senses at any voice of the Prophets, even the most holy; but a foreign people, to whom it was least preached, immediately assumed penance. Thus he deplores more the blindness of his own people than the repentance of others. We can also rightly add this, that Jonah could then conjecture that many

would blaspheme the name of God, and despise the gift of prophecy, as if the Prophet Jonah, who clearly agitated by the divine Spirit had preached penance, had spoken from himself, which indeed would have somewhat prejudiced divine glory. Just as that which the peculiar people were to be rejected, seems to yield to contempt of God. And so varied was the Prophet's thought. Behold you preached penance to the Ninevites, and that that city was to be overthrown, has not God changed His sentence, and not overthrown it? Therefore you threatened this in vain, undoubtedly you made it up from yourself. He was burning within himself, with a certain zeal and indignation. We do not excuse Jonah from all crime. We see such affections, when Prophets are moved either by the glory of God which they are zealous for, or even by the zeal of charity, deserve great pardon from God. If we look at Elijah himself, how great zeal he was endowed with, who even expostulated with God, asking that heaven be closed, until he himself sought rain, it was great audacity in the Prophet: whence did that proceed? Undoubtedly from great faith in God. Charity covers a multitude of sins, and those things which cannot be sufficiently defended by themselves.

2 And he expostulated with God, and said, O Lord, is not this my word, when I was still in my own land? Therefore I anticipated to flee to Tarshish, because I know that you are a gentle and merciful God, long of face (that is, long-suffering or prolonging anger), and great in power (that is, mercy) and repenting over evil.

That prayer is remarkable: after Jonah had previously been so vexed by the storm of the sea, and that three-day hiding in the belly of the fish, and in a way forced to recant, because he had unjustly fled, now again he seems to justify his deed, and to excuse for what reason he had previously fled. For he says he fled not only because of disobedience, but because he feared that God would give pardon to the repenting Ninevites, and it would result in the condemnation of Israel, and in prejudice of the prophetic gift, or divine glory. Thus the Prophet excuses himself here. as if he were saying, I knew this before: that you are a merciful God, why did you thrust me out? Now you revoke your sentence, and I am, as it were, proved vain. I was already thinking that with myself, when I was in my land Israel, and before I was warned a second time to preach to the Ninevites, therefore I also fled. For I knew this to be your reproach to have mercy and spare. And he beautifully commends divine mercy with many

epithets. הַכֵּן gracious God, who expends benefit. רַחֵם merciful with a certain affection. He says, You indeed have this by nature, you prefer to make men safe, than to destroy (Ezek. 18). Thus the mercy of God exalts justice. I knew this already before that you are kind and merciful, and do not therefore threaten punishment, that you may delight in it, but that you may provoke to repentance. אֲפִים אֵדן slow to anger, prolonging angry faces, you can scarcely be induced to at last declare anger in your countenance. Hence they are called by the Apostle treasures of long-suffering, patience, etc., but that long-suffering turns out badly for the unrepentant. God is patient, if we will not want to abuse His kindness. רַב הַמֶּד You have various ways, by which you can have mercy on men; you stimulate them by various occasions that you may have cause for mercy. Certainly we who have more clearly recognized the Gospel, and the benefit exhibited through Christ, have whereof we may rejoice, acknowledging that most firm sentence of mercy, how inclined God is to be propitious. He says therefore, Lord thus you inflict evil, which you would prefer not to inflict, and if occasion is given for not punishing man, you entirely forgive whatever has been sinned against you. God from eternity has mercy on all.

3 And now Lord, I beseech you, take my soul from me: because my death is better than my life.

It is a prayer of the Prophet, Now may I see, Lord, your people thus condemned, I grieve so much, that I wish death for myself. The Apostle desired to be anathema for his people, indicating continuous grief and torment. The Prophet was not ignorant, to what this divine dispensation looked, and whatever He was doing with the Ninevites; but the condemnation of Israel was so grave for the Prophet, that he no longer desired to live. Such affections indeed you will find also among other friends of God. Moses also, when God was about to destroy the people entirely, when he had interceded much and long with God, and could not yet placate Him, added this: that He should also delete him from the book of life. The same as this, which is said here, Take me also with them: how shall I be able to live hereafter, when I shall have seen your people taken away from the midst? Nothing is sweet to me anymore in this life. It does not seem to me what most make much of, as if it saddened the Prophet, when he saw them do penance: but he was afflicted by the punishment and destruction of his own, as you will hear afterwards about the withering of the gourd, which signified the destruction of the

Jewish people. Jonah grieved over the destruction of the people of Israel, not so much over the salvation of the Assyrians.

4 And the Lord said, Does anger benefit you well?

Others thus interpret, Do you think that you are justly angry? God rebukes him for this, his sadness and anger. Do you think that you have just anger, that you are indignant, because I have recalled this people from sins? Perhaps God through His Spirit gave Jonah to recognize, what the salvation of the Ninevites signifies. As often as we murmur about the judgments of God, we are by no means excused. Therefore concerning the people of God it was not permitted for the Prophet to be angry with God. For men are in the hand of the Lord as clay in the hand of the potter, which also the Apostle after Isaiah argues, And whom He wills He chooses, and reprobates, etc. Now when God willed to reprobate Israel, He was undoubtedly about to reprobate justly, why therefore was the Prophet angry? Thus he is well admonished, but as a friend of God. He does not now so afflict him as before with the storm, because he was not disobedient, but was taking on himself an affection not joined with wisdom. But God timely admonishes: as if He were saying, Consider better, O Jonah, whether it does not befit me to do this. We will also be able to make this saying useful to ourselves, as often as through weakness, or in a trifling matter we are angry, that we may better consider the matter itself, and see whether we are rightly angry. The saying of the Psalmist, Be angry, and do not sin. If anyone is angry for a right cause, he is irreproachable. But let anyone examine his own affections, whether he is angry from just causes. If something is taken away from your own advantage, you are immediately indignant, and in others' affairs you are slow to anger; but you act badly, because this exists as the greatest cause of angers among mortals.

5 And Jonah went out of the city, and sat to the East towards the city, and made for himself there a shelter, and sat under it in the shade, until he might see what would happen in the city.

Because 11 days had already passed, and the Prophet saw that what he had predicted was not at all happening, he goes out to see the end of the city. This again was done by divine dispensation. Jonah is a type of Christ. But how it now fits, that Jonah bears the type of Christ after Christ has risen: those who teach the reason of allegories say that what is fulfilled in Christ's members is also fulfilled in Christ

himself. Paul and the Apostles grieved beyond measure: undoubtedly what is ascribed to the body also pertains to the head.

Reading 9.

The Prophets propose one and the same thing in various ways. But there is no more frequent calling than that of the Gentiles, which contains in itself that mystery hidden from ages: which calling of the Gentiles, I say, could not happen unless the Jews were blinded. Therefore those who wished well to the Jews, grieved not a little whenever they knew these things would happen. Hence it is that Jonah, having seen the repentance of the Ninevites, and understanding that it resulted in the perdition of the people of Israel and condemnation, was exceedingly saddened, as we recently explained, and we excuse him to some extent, although not entirely. Therefore rebuked by God.

DO YOU THINK?) That is, your anger is unjust, even if I shall destroy the people of Israel, because they have well deserved it. That very thing is now described by a beautiful figure through the withering of the ivy, or white vine, under which Jonah rested. Just as he grieved before, so now also he grieves that the white vine is withering. In sum, what does the leafy ivy without fruits, bringing more shade than light, mean, except that the people of Israel are signified without fruit? When therefore Jonah, gifted with the prophetic spirit, seeing his people somehow designated, is angry. Certainly these things in some way pertain to God's dispensation, and have their own significance. It is proper to Prophets to contemplate the end of this world and of things. Then if you refer these things in some way to Christ, I do not object. Already before, God had determined what would be: He prepared for Himself a certain tabernacle, and in it He has His habitation, namely in the Prophets and Patriarchs. Just as we say God dwells in the temple, so also He dwelt for some time in the Prophets and all the faithful, until it would appear what end the affairs of the world would have even under the end of ages, to whom Christ was promised.

6 And the Lord God prepared an ivy (Others say a gourd, others a white vine, it is uncertain what kind of shrub or tree it is, even among the Hebrews there is not the same opinion: let it be whatever shrub it doesn't matter, yet it has the appearance of an ivy spreading itself and extending with many small

branches) *and made it ascend over Jonah that it might be a shade over his head, to make shade for him from his evil* (that is, from the heat) *and Jonah rejoiced over the ivy with great joy.*

Because the Lord peculiarly chose for Himself the people of the Jews, giving them the Law and ceremonies of that kind, such as no people under heaven had. They had sacrifices and the temple with its ornament, about which things the Prophets greatly rejoiced, because they did something to commend the glory of God. Therefore we can understand the glory and beauty of the Jewish nation, exalted in its priesthood and kingdom in whatever way beyond other peoples, through the ivy, in which there is more ornament than fruits. The Prophets and holy men of God were greatly delighted because, born from the Jewish people, and living among them, and protected by God, while they kept His precepts; and they were preserved from evil, that is, from all persecution, which threatened this nation. They had their protection, therefore not only Jonah rejoiced, but also other Prophets. All their zeal was because the name of the Lord was glorified, and their grief when they abused it. There was great glory of both the first and second temple, which is rightly compared to such a shrub. Others depict this Prophet as subject to various affections, and now angry, now rejoicing from trifling causes: yet I would wish that they would look to the principal scope of Scripture, to which Christ looked in Matthew 12, where he indicated that it would happen, that Jonah for three days, etc. There meanwhile Christ threatened the Jews that because of their sin against the Holy Spirit, the kingdom of God would be taken away from them, which was also taken away. This is also signified here in some way through that ivy that would become dry. The Jews greatly rejoiced in their kingdom, of which however they deserved to be deprived. Let it be that in the Prophet there were such affections, nevertheless the Lord ordained that some mysteries should be drawn out from there. But it seems to me altogether that the Prophet, who had already prophesied for a long time to Israel, and finding no fruit of repentance, could easily have known, with the Spirit revealing, why indeed God does such things. For when we see this in other Prophets, what wonder if it is also thus revealed to this Prophet?

7 And God prepared a worm in the rising of the dawn of the following day, and it struck that ivy and it withered.

What God was about to do with the hypocritical people, in whom He found no fruit, in whom many leaves, and no figs, appears here. But I understand through the worm the wrath of God and fury against the Jewish people because of its most grave sins. When now a new age was beginning, and Christ was to be sent when He was to be sent, as it were a new day then arose. The people of Israel were to be blinded altogether, that the fullness of the Gentiles might enter. This hidden counsel of God was for many ages. Above he said, And the Lord God appointed. Here he puts only האל והים, which refers to the judgment of God; although others understand the Roman people and other enemies of the people of Israel.

8 And it happened that when the sun rose, God appointed a drying eastern wind, and the sun struck upon Jonah's head, and he fainted (namely in strength) and he asked for his soul to die, and said: My death is better than my life.

It happened, he says, when the second day arose. It seems to be one thing in the allegorical sense for the day to arise, and another for the sun to strike. The rising of the sun brings joy, the heat of the sun brings discomfort. Hence we almost always understand persecution through midday and through heat. But through the rising of the sun, if we look at allegories, the rising of light and truth. At the time when the sun rose, and when now shadow has given way to truth, all things are gracious to men, but grace and truth through Jesus Christ. God appointed an eastern wind (which he called before a worm, that is, His judgment and fury) which extracted all moisture from that material, and thus that ivy or that people was deprived of all protection. What wonder if it easily withered at the breath of such a hard and harsh wind? Because it lacked moisture and divine dew. God allowed the Jews by their malice to render themselves unworthy of God's grace: for many unworthy were called to the supper, who did not come. The Jews were exposed to such great evil, whence the Romans and other nations conquered Jerusalem, and thus all the beauty of the Jewish people perished. Therefore we understand that Jonah had previously discovered that persecution from the Prophets. For when Daniel and others recognized those most severe tribulations, they fainted. So also Jonah when he foreknew that persecution, he saw altogether that the end of his people would be present; therefore he asked to die, and he thought nothing was more difficult for him than to see his people thus go to ruin.

LIFE.) With what affection he said these words, I have explained from the words of the Apostle, who wanted to be anathema for his people. The Prophets seemed to themselves to be carried by a just zeal of God, yet altogether it was decreed before God. The mystery of God concluded with Himself, that the Gentiles should be called.

9 And God said to Jonah: Is your anger good over the ivy? And he said, my anger is good even unto death.

Whoever will have thought with himself of the magnificence of the temple, the sanctity of the Prophets, the innumerable privileges, which were granted to the people of Israel, it is no wonder if he is held by almost the same affection. What father if he saw his son fall into fire, would he not almost prefer to be consumed by fire himself, than to suffer the boy to be thus endangered? But since the Prophets were endowed with such great charity, indeed greater, because there was greater danger there, it is no wonder if they uttered such voices. This contention of the Prophet against God has not been heard before. Do you think that the Prophet made so much of the shade of this ivy? Do you think he wanted to have a perpetual habitation there? It is certain to me, that he knew what the Lord signified.

10 And the Lord said: You have pity over the gourd, in which you did not labor, and you did not exalt it, which is a son of the night (which arose in one night) and a son of the night perished (that is, it lasted one night),

11 And shall I not have pity over Nineveh that great city, in which there is a multitude more than twelve myriads of men, who do not know between their right hand and their left hand, and many cattle?

You grieve over the people, and you seem to yourself to grieve rightly (for God does not greatly rebuke him because of his affection): what you want to have, you will freely permit me this, that I give the same grace to all, whom I have created; do they not have the same creator God? Here we manifestly have the calling of the Gentiles promised. You did not labor, it is my work, for a short time I exalted that people. Just as the shadiness of the ivy was not from your work, so neither was the people: although you are a minister, yet I am the one who exalted this people, but only for a time. Did you not meanwhile rejoice because you were enjoying the shade of the ivy? Grant also to me, that by my just judgment I may not allow a far different people than this to perish. The people is compared to the ivy,

and people to people. What did it matter to compare the people to the ivy, unless the Lord had understood the people through the ivy?

MYRIADS.) Here a certain number is taken for an uncertain. And almost all of them sin through ignorance, like children who do not yet have judgment between right and left. Why, therefore, should I not save such a great people? Thus the Lord promises His mercy to all, and wants the salvation of man, not perdition. Salvation is from God, perdition from ourselves.

END OF THE ANNOTATIONS ON THE PROPHET JONAH.