

LECTURES UPON JONAH.

DELIVERED AT YORK,
IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1594.

BY

JOHN KING,

AFTERWARDS LORD BISHOP OF LONDON.



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THE author of the quaint and rich 'Lectures' on the Book of Jonah, now reprinted after a long interval of comparative neglect—JOHN KING—is one of those elder Worthies whose present obscurity contrasts with their contemporary veneration and renown.

Those who love our old literature assign a near-hand place in the shelf of choice books to the antique, various-editioned quarto—usually found done up daintily in fair white vellum, with ties, and touched with faded gold—which enshrines the ripe wisdom, the learning, not 'a mere hoard of gold,* the sinewy wit, the nimble fancies, the dexterous home-thrusts, the well-put axioms, passing away occasionally into quiet mirth, now of a saw and now of a pun, and the racy common sense—finest and most uncommon of all sense—expressed not seldom weightily and memorably, of these 'Lectures'; while his rarely occurring single 'Sermons,' delivered at 'St Paul's Crosse,' and elsewhere, cause the genuine Bibliomaniac's heart to rejoice over them as one who 'findeth great spoil.† But, as with Dr Airay and others, his book is his one memorial. Of the man himself—emphatically, 'a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith' (Acts xi. 24),—mournfully little is known.

The name—KING—suggests regal descent; and the family of our Bishop were not slow to assert the claim. His son Henry, bishop of Chichester, and a 'sweet singer' among the minor poets of England, in his 'Elegy' upon his father, thus boasts:—

. 'from ancestors thou came,
Old as the *Heptarchy*, great as thy *name*.'‡

The 'Herald's College' furnishes an elaborate pedigree, paternally and maternally, the root of which reaches back to the stock—as the descendants of our good bishop were fond of supposing—of the old West-Saxon kings. 'It is very possible,' says Hannah, 'that this tradition may have originated in the accidental meaning of their name; but the later members of the family entertained no doubts upon the subject of their royal ancestry; for we meet with both 'the ancient kings of Devonshire,' and the arms of King on all their monuments, although even these latter, which are undoubtedly authentic, do not appear to have had any such prominence till they were painted by the sons of Bishop John King on the windows of Christ Church.'§ From

* 2 Henry IV., iv. 3.

† For a list of these see Watt, *Bib. Brit.*; Wood, *A. O.* ii. pp. 295, 296; Hannah as below, page xci.

‡ *Poems and Psalms by Henry King, D.D., &c.*, edited by the Rev. J. Hannah, 1843, 12mo, page 53.

§ As *ante*, †, page ii. We take this opportunity of acknowledging our obligations throughout to this erudite but provokingly fragmentary edition of a true poet. For many of the facts in our Memoir, our chief authority is Hannah: but in every case we have gone to the original sources.

Byshe,* and Wood,† and Munday,‡ and Fuller,§ and others, the same industrious biographer of Bishop Henry has compiled super-abundant details. Thither the curious in such things are referred.||

Whatever may be the truth of their descent, the family was certainly in possession of very considerable wealth and influence before the middle of the sixteenth century. At the time of the dissolution of the monasteries, Robert (the brother of William) Kynge, who had been abbot of Osney, was advanced to the newly created see of Oxford, in September 1542, and 'left a great personal estate.' William Kynge married a daughter of Sir John Williams of Burfield, in Berkshire, whose second son was created Viscount Williams of Thame, Apr. 5: 1 Mar. 1554. This connection will explain the removal of the family to the borders of Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, where two of the sons of William King were settled, at the villages of Shabington and Worminghall. One of these, Philip King of Worminghall, was educated under the supervision of his two uncles, Sir John (afterwards Lord) Williams, and the Bishop of Oxford; and was page in his youth to King Henry VIII. Though a younger son, he was wealthy, having inherited the estates of Bishop Robert Kynge. About the year 1553 or 1554, he married Elizabeth Conquest, of Houghton-Conquest, in Bedfordshire, by whom he had no fewer than twelve children. The most famous of them was our bishop, who was born 'about 1559,' in Worminghall, 'commonly called,' says Anthony a-Wood, 'Wornal, near to Brill in Bucks.'¶ A very fair-faced pleasant village is this Worminghall still. Leafy lanes, that lead out to green fields, odor of kine, and fertile downs, brightened with the gleam of rivulets singing beneath the alders, and many a 'sweet meadow,' overshadowed with skirting woods, that surround 'manors' all bright with lustrous memories, make it a covetable birth-place.

Of the childhood of Master John nothing seems to have come down. Probably he attended first of all the village school; but while a mere boy he was removed to London, and there 'was educated in grammar learning in Westminster school.'** From thence he was sent to Oxford. The following table presents his progress there:—

1. Student of Christ Church (from Westminster), 1576.
2. Passed B.A., January 26. 1579–80.
3. Commenced M.A., February 15. 1582–3.
4. Proctor of the University, April 29. 1589.††

When young King proceeded to Oxford in his seventeenth year, there were various 'exiles for religion,' from France and elsewhere, resident in the university. Anthony a-Wood enumerates several, as Petrus Regius, Giles Gualter, Petrus Lozillerius Villerius, and Peter Baro, D.D., of Cambridge. The last appears to have come to Oxford in the same year, 1576, in which King joined; and it is just possible, and therefore to be noted, that inasmuch as Baro's notorious 'Comment on *Jonah*' originated the keen controversy with Chaderton and many other divines, our 'Lecturer' on the same prophet may have had his attention turned to that book by his early acquaintance with Baro, and necessary interest in the long debate thereupon.

The more famous of his contemporaries were John Doderidge, afterwards Sir John, the dis-

* Visit of Sussex, 1662–8.

† *Athenæ* and *Fasti*, *sub nomine*, also his *Antiq.* Oxon. iii. 466 (ed. Gutch).

‡ In his edition of Stowe's Survey of London, 1633, p. 775. § Church History, b. x. page 90.

|| As *ante*, †, pages lxxxiii–ciii. Cf. also pp. ii, iii, whence the above details are drawn.

¶ A. O. ii. 294. It is said that Henry, the eldest son

of our Bishop (afterwards Bishop of Chichester, and of whom more anon), was born in the same chamber where his father also had been born. See Fuller, 'Worthies' of Bucks, p. 132. Hannah, p. i. ** *Ibid.*

†† From Wood, in A. O., and *Fasti, sub annis*, and relative notes of Kennet and Bliss. Cf. also Hannah as before, pp. lxxxix, xc.

KING ON JONAH.

LECTURE I.

The word of the Lord came also unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, and go to Nineveh, &c.--
'JONAH I. 1, 2.

COMPARISONS betwixt scripture and scripture are both odious and dangerous. In other sorts of things, whatsoever is commendable may either be matched or preferred according to the worth of them. I will not make myself so skilful in the orders of heaven, as to advance angel above angel,* but I am sure 'one star differeth from another in glory;' and God hath given the rule of the day to the sun, of the night to the moon, because they differ in beauty. The captains of the sons of Gad, without offence, might bear an unequal report: 'One of the least could resist an hundred, and the greatest a thousand,' 1 Chron. xii., because their prowess and acts were not equal. There was no wrong done in the anthem which the women sung from all the cities of Israel, 'Saul hath slain his thousand, and David his ten thousand,' 1 Sam. xviii. The unlike deserts of these two princes might justly admit an unlike commendation. One Cato may be of more price than hundred thousands of vulgar men, and Plato may stand for all.† Our Saviour, in the Gospel, Luke v. 39, preferreth old wine before new; and Aristotle liketh better of the wine of Lesbos than the wine of Rhodes: he affirmeth both to be good, but the Lesbian the more pleasant, alluding under that parable to the successor of his school, and noting his choice rather of Theophrastus, born at Lesbos, than Menedemus, at Rhodes.‡ But 'the whole scripture is given by inspiration of God,' neither in his great house of written counsels is there any vessel more or less in honour than the rest are. Moses is no better than Samuel; Samuel than David; David a king than Amos an herdman; John Baptist more than a prophet,

* Quid sint, dicant qui possunt, dummodo quod dicunt probare valeant.—*August. Enchirid. cap. xxxviii.*

† Unus Cato mihi pro centum millibus; Plato instar omnium.

‡ Aul. Gell. Noct. Attic. xiii. 5.

not more than a prophet in his authority; Peter or Andrew, the first that was chosen, not better than Paul, that was born out of due time. The four beasts in the Revelation, chap. iv., have eyes alike, 'before and behind;' and the apostles' names are evenly placed in the writings of the holy foundation, Rev. xxi. 12. Solomon, the wisest king that ever was in Jerusalem, perceived right well that wheresoever the uncreated wisdom of God spake, it spake of 'excellent things, even things seemly for princes,' Prov. viii.; David, his princely father before him, had so high a conceit of these ordinances of the Most High, that where he defineth anything, he esteemeth them, for value, above great spoils, and thousands of gold and silver, yea, all manner of riches; and for sweetness, above the honey, and the honeycomb, Ps. xix.; and where he leaveth to define, he breaketh off with admiration: 'Wonderful are thy testimonies;' 'I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy commandment is exceeding broad,' meaning thereby, not less than infinite.

The Jews acknowledge the Old Testament, abhor the New; the Turks disclaim; Julian, atheists, and scornors deride; Grecians have stumbled at both Old and New; papists enlarge the Old with apocryphal writings; some of the ancient heretics renounce some prophets, others added to the number of evangelists; but, as the disciples of Christ had but 'one Master,' or teacher in heaven, 'and they were all brethren,' Mat. xxiii. so one was the author of these holy writs in heaven, and they are all sisters and companions; and with an impartial respect have the children of Christ's family from time to time received, revered, and embraced the whole and entire volume of them. They know that one Lord was the original fountain of them all, who being supremely good, wrought and spake perfect goodness. One word and wisdom of

God revealed these words to the sons of men, himself the subject and scope of them;* one Holy Ghost indited them; one blood of the lamb sealed and confirmed the contents of them; one measure of inspiration was given to the penmen and actuaries that set them down; one spouse and beloved of Christ, as gages of his eternal love, hath received them all in keeping. And surely she hath kept them as the apple of her eye; and rather than any maim or rent should be made in their sacred body, she hath sent her children into heaven maimed in their own bodies, and spoiled of their dearest blood they had, thinking it a crown of joy unto them, to lay down their lives in the cause of truth. And therefore, as branches of the same vine that bare our predecessors, to whom by devolution these sacred statutes are come, we esteem them all for God's most royal and celestial testament, the oracles of his heavenly sanctuary, the only key unto us of his revealed counsels, milk from his sacred breasts, the earnest and pledge of his favour to his church, the light of our feet, joy of our hearts, breath of our nostrils, pillar of our faith, anchor of our hope, ground of our love, evidences and deeds of our future blessedness; pronouncing of the whole book, with every schedule and scroll therein contained, as he† did of a book that Sextius wrote, but upon far better grounds, *vivit, viget, liber est, supra hominem est*; it is a book of life, a book of livelihood, a book indeed, savouring of more than the wit of man. Notwithstanding, as the parcels of this book were published and delivered by divers notaries, the instruments of God's own lips, in divers ages, divers places, upon divers occasions, and neither the argument nor the style, nor the end and purpose the same in them all;‡ some recounting things forepast; some foreseeing things to come; some singing of mercy; some of judgment; some shallow for the lamb to wade in; some deep enough to bear and drown the elephant; some meat that must be broken and chewed with painful exposition;§ some drink that at the first sight may be supped and swallowed down; somewhat in some or other part that may please all humours, as the Jews imagine of their manna, that it relished not to all alike, but to every man seemed to taste accordingly as his heart lusted;|| so, though they were all written for our learning and comfort, yet some may accord at times, and lend application unto us for their matter and use, more than others. Of all the fowls of the air, I mean the prophets of the Lord, flying from heaven with the wings of divine inspiration, I have chosen the *dove*, (for so the name of Jonah importeth, and Jerome so rendereth it to Paulinus), to be the subject of my labour and travel undertaken amongst you; who, under the type of his shipwreck and escape, figuring the passion and resurrection of the Son of God, and

* Verba innumerabilia, et unum tantum verbum omnia.—*Hugo de arca Noe.* † Seneca.
‡ Gregor. prolegom. in moral. § Ibid. || Hieron.

coming from the sea of Tarshish, as that dove of Noah's ark came from the waters of the flood, with an olive branch in his lips in sign of peace, preacheth to Nineveh, to the gentiles, to the whole world, the unreserved goodness of God towards repentant sinners.

For if you will know in brief what the argument of this prophet is, it is abridged in that sentence of the psalm: 'The Lord is merciful and gracious, of long-suffering, and of great goodness,' Ps. cxlv. He is merciful, in the first part of the prophecy, to the mariners; gracious, in the second, to Jonah; long-suffering, in the third, to the Ninevites; and of great goodness, in the fourth, in pleading the rightfulness of his mercy, and yielding a reason of his fact to him which had no reason to demand it. So from the four chapters of Jonah, as from the four winds, is sent a comfortable breath and gale of most abundant mercies. And as the four streams in paradise, flowing from one head, were the same water in four divisions, so the four chapters or sections of this treatise are but quadruple mercy, or mercy in four parts; and so much the rather to be hearkened unto, as an action of mercy is more grateful unto us than the contemplation, the use than the knowledge, the example than the promise; and it is sweeter to our taste, being experienced by proof, than when it is but taught and discoursed. You hear the principal matter of the prophecy; but if you would know besides what riches it offereth unto you, it is a spiritual library, as Cassiodore noted of the psalms, of most kinds of doctrine fit for meditation; or as Isidore spake of the Lord's prayer and the creed, the whole breadth of Scripture, *omnis latitudo scripturarum*, may hither be reduced. Here you have Genesis, in the sudden and miraculous creation of a gourd, Moses and the law in denunciation of judgment, Chronicle in the relation of an history, prophecy in prefiguring the resurrection of Christ, psalmody in the song that Jonah composed, and finally gospel in the remission of sin mightily and effectually demonstrated.

The duties of princes, pastors, people, all estates; the nature of fear, force of prayer, wages of disobedience, fruit of repentance, are herein comprised. And as the finers of silver and gold make use not only of the wedge, but even of the smallest foil or rays that their metal casteth,* so in this little manual which I have in hand, besides the plenty and store of the deeper matters, there is not the least jot and tittle therein, but may minister grace to attentive hearers.

The substance of the chapter presently to be handled and examined, spendeth itself about two persons, Jonah and the mariners. In the one, opening his commission, transgression, apprehension, execution;† in the other, their fear, and consequent behaviour,

* Non tantum auri massas tollunt, verum et bracteolas parvas.—*Chrys. hom. i., ad pop. Antio. chap. i.*

† Præco mittitur, missus contemnit, contemnens fugit, fugiens dormit, &c.—*Isidor. lib. de patrib. vet. testament.*

1 A Lecture Upon the Shadow Shadow John Donne was representative of the metaphysical poets of his time. He set the metaphysical mode by vibrancy of language and startling imagery, and a preference for a diction modelled on direct utterances. He was brought up as a Roman Catholic (later he converted to Anglicanism), and was Dean of St. Paul's Church till his death.