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A BIGOTED PROPHET
Jonah Displeased Because Repentant Nineveh Is Spared.
STORY BY THE "HIGHWAY AND BYWAY" PREACHER
(Copyright, 1928, by the author, W. S. Edson.)
Scripture Authority—Jonah, chapters 3 and 4.

SERMONETTE.

"God saw. . . God repented. . . He did it not." That is a revelation of God dealing in mercy and love with a wicked people.
Who is there who can charge God with favoritism? With harsh and unreasoning judgment against sin?
Nineveh stands out a perpetual challenge against the claim that God ever punishes unjustly or before he has given full opportunity for repentance and a turning from the sin that would destroy.

God saw "that the people of Nineveh brought forth works meet for repentance."
The prophet was so blinded by his prejudices and the narrow hatred of the Jews for every other nation that he could not see anything but the wickedness of the city and believe that the only just course was the destruction of the city.
But God saw. How comforting and encouraging is the thought that God sees. Human eyes are prone to only see the weaknesses and failures. God sees the quickening purpose in the heart for a better life. He sees the first slow, faltering steps towards him, and in patience and love he stays his hand of judgment and holds out the other in which are offered mercy and forgiveness.

Truly, as the Lord hath said: "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked."
On the contrary hear him plead, "that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?"
So much for God and his infinite love and mercy which reach out to the far off Nineveh, bestowing pardon instead of judgment.

But what of the preacher? No credit to him for the repentance of Nineveh. His bigotry would have shut the great city out of the pale of God's mercy. He spoke the message God had given him to speak, a message of impending judgment, with no thought, or wish, or prayer that Nineveh might repent and be spared.
Jonah had like many a modern-day preacher that "I-am-hollower-than-thou" feeling, and went about his preaching in a perfunctory way, delivering his message because it was the word, and because he knew he must preach it, but never for a moment feeling the heart-throb of God, or that yearning for the salvation of a perishing soul.
Religious exclusiveness or bigotry have done more to retard the onward progress of the kingdom of Christ than any direct forces of evil which have been brought to bear upon Christian work and workers.

THE STORY.

NINEVEH was in a turmoil of excitement. A strange preacher had suddenly appeared in the street of the great city and was proclaiming a message from the great God of heaven and earth, the God of gods who ruled over all, and who was able to destroy and to make alive. At first the multitudes had been disposed to mock and ridicule the oddly-garbed preacher, and to laugh with scorn at the warning that "yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown."
But as day after day this preacher had passed up and down the city proclaiming his message, and the miraculous story was told from mouth to mouth how the preacher had been cast into the sea, and how his God, who had sent him to the city, had prepared a great fish to receive him and bring him safe to land, a sober, thoughtful hearing was given him. As a result it was not long ere word was brought to the king concerning the man and his message.

"Nineveh to be destroyed?" he cried. "Nay, it cannot be."
But fear took hold upon his heart. The message of the prophet troubled him day and night, and at last he laid aside his robes of state, and putting on in their place the sackcloth and ashes which betokened deep mourning and grief, he proclaimed a fast throughout the city, decreeing that the people from the king and nobles down should neither eat bread nor drink water until the wrath of the God of gods had been appeased.
What a transformation that was! When Jonah entered the city's gates he had found the people given to all manner of feasting, and gayety, and wickedness, and now these things had all been put away and the people did not so much as eat or drink, whereas before they had indulged in all manner of excesses. Instead of the rfid dances and the licentious worship in the groves, the people gave themselves up to mourning. When they were not listening to the strange preacher's message they were rehearsing to one another the things which he said.
And that they believed his message was certain, for they confessed one to another that there were no gods of the people of Nineveh like unto the great God who had spoken the words of judgment against their city. And believing this, all the gross and gorgeous worship of the many gods of Nineveh was stopped, and instead there was a turning in thought to the great unknown God who was able to destroy and was able to make alive.

They knew this last must be true, indeed, for had not the great God snatched this strange preacher from the very jaws of death and preserved his life when the sea had opened to swallow him up, forever?
Jonah was not insensible to the change which had come over the city, but instead of softening his heart towards the people who gave such evident signs of repentance, it had the contrary effect. In the seething heat of his bitter bigotry all impulses of mercy and love were burned up, so that with increasing vehemence he preached the certain destruction of the city. And with increasing fervor the people sought after this great God, saying over and over to each other:

"Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?"
So it was that as the end of the 40 days drew near a very great cry went up from the city to the God of heaven that he would spare them.
Jonah, hearing the cry, and beholding the great distress of the people, was moved with still deeper resentment. How could God hear such a people? Would God spare? Impossible! Were these people not outside the covenant blessing of God? What right had they to claim or expect mercy from the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? And how could God show kindness to Israel and spare so powerful an enemy? Had not God said that the coast of Israel was to be restored and how could this be brought about if Nineveh were spared?

"Yea," exclaimed Jonah, bitterly. "How can God show mercy to Nineveh to the hurt of his chosen people? And yet—and yet—" He did not finish the sentence, save with a half sob, half angry cry, but it was plain that the prophet feared that God would show mercy instead of executing judgment as he had declared he would.
"If Nineveh is spared, what will ever my nation say of me? Can they not well say that I have proved false to them? Surely there will be all but condemnation that I should have gone and preached to those who are our enemies and saved them from destruction. Oh, woe is me; woe is me! Better that I had died than to have come thither."

"Thus, in bitterness of heart, Jonah waited, but notwithstanding his disappointment he obediently went higher and thither delivering his message, and hoping against hope that God would yet punish the great city for all its wickedness.
So the days were fulfilled when the city was to be destroyed.
From his vantage point on the east side of the city Jonah watched and waited. Would God send fire from heaven to burn it up as he did Sodom and Gomorrah, or would he open and swallow it up? All through the night he watched and waited, no sleep coming to his anxious eyes and troubled heart, and with the first gleam of the morning light he was straining his eyes towards the city.

"Yea, it is just as I feared. Why should I, a Jew, live longer when mercy is thus shown to these miserable, despised Gentiles? Oh, Lord," he cried, lifting his eyes toward heaven, "take my life."
And as he waited thus with his face lifted upward there came a voice from above, saying:
"Dost thou well to be angry?"
Jonah made no reply, but sank upon the ground, and as the sun came up he became conscious of the shade of the gourd which God had caused to grow up during the night and which gave him cooling protection all through the day.
But that night God sent a worm which cut the vine off and caused it to wither, so that the next morning the full rays of the hot eastern sun beat relentlessly upon the head of Jonah, so that he cried in his misery and anguish:

"It is better for me to die than to live."
And the voice of God sounded out of the heaven saying:
"Dost thou well to be angry for the gourd?"
"Yea, I do well to be angry even unto death," impatiently cried the prophet.

Again came the voice from heaven saying:
"Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for which thou hast not labored, neither madest it to grow; which came up in a night and which perished in a night; and should I not spare Nineveh, that great city, where are more than 60,000 little ones who are unable to discern between their right hand and their left?"
The voice ceased and Jonah was left to heart-searching meditation.

"Ah," he thought, as he took up the long journey homeward, "who can measure the fathomless depths of God's mercy, or know the power of His love?"
The Biggest Man Ever.
"Til bet none of you folk know that the largest man that ever lived was born and raised in North Carolina," said a tall fellow at the Hoffman House the other night. "His existence and dimensions are vouched for in the American Encyclopedia.
"His name was Miles Darden. He was seven feet six inches high, and in 1845 weighed 871 pounds. He was born in North Carolina in 1798 and died in Tennessee January 23, 1857. Until 1853 he was able to go about his work in an active manner, but his weight increased so fast that after that year when he wanted to move about he had to be hauled in a two-horse wagon. In 1839, it is chronicled that his coat was buttoned around three men, each weighing more than 200 pounds, who walked together in it down the streets in Lexington, N. C. At his death he is said to have weighed not less than 1,000 pounds. His coffin was eight feet long, 35 inches deep, 32 inches across the breast, 13 inches across the head and 14 across the feet. These measurements were taken at the time and are matters of historical record."
New York Press.

New Verb in France.
The French are adopting a new verb, "businer," meaning to transact affairs in a bold, hustling spirit. The fact that the verb is derived from the English word "business" may be taken as another tribute to the commercial superiority of the Anglo-Saxon.

Jim Cradlebaugh, Head-Liner
By Wm. Hamilton Osborns
(Copyright, by Shortstory Pub. Co.)

When old bleary McGaffney, the town inebriate, was accidentally killed big Jim Cradlebaugh apprised the widow of her bereavement.
"What am I a-goin' to do?" wailed the widow.
"Now, don't you worry, Missus McGaffney," said big Jim Cradlebaugh ostentatiously, "the town'll see that you don't suffer. I'll see to it. I'll make the boys shell out." He laid a coin down on the window-sill. "There's half a dollar for your immediate needs, Missus McGaffney," he told her, "and don't you worry. I'll make the boys do their part, too."

He started in to do it. Down in the office of the Donaldson Daily they were waiting for him—the boys.
"Now, boys," he said, as he bustled into the office of the Daily, "gimme a sheet of paper. This here is for contributors for Sarah McGaffney, the bereaved. There you are. There's my name at the head, where it always is in this here town. I subscribe half a dollar, do you see? Come, now, put your names in. Don't be afraid. The list 'll be printed in the Daily just as usual. I give half a dollar. Who'll give more?"
Young Bill Mathewson, the hardware man, stepped forward. "Mr. Cradlebaugh," he said, and his lip curled as he said it, "I'm worth about one-tenth the sum that you are. Put me down for five dollars—I'll give ten times as much as you."

Jim Cradlebaugh was never feezed. "Hurrah," he said, "example is contagious. I give 50 cents, and the next man gives five dollars. Who'll give more? Come, now, your names'll all be printed, don't you know. Won't they, Bartlett?"
Bartlett, editor and proprietor of the Donaldson Daily, nodded. "As usual," he responded. But his lip curled just a little, too. For the only thing that the town could give Jim Cradlebaugh credit for was that he could make other people give. He was the originator of the published lists in the Daily. He had started them during the smallpox scare some three years before, and the editor acknowledged to himself that the idea was a good one. Charity is a pleasant weakness, but it becomes much more attractive when it is set before the eyes of men, with names and amounts in full.

But Cradlebaugh—the town was disgusted with Cradlebaugh; the Donaldson Daily was disgusted with him, though it did not dare to say so. Jim Cradlebaugh could have bought and sold many men in the town of Donaldson; he was fat with prosperity. But never yet had he given a five-dollar bill on any one occasion, though when he gave the whole town knew it. Cradlebaugh took care to let them know it. He was more than a laugh-stock in the town; he was the subject of bitter jeers. But he never realized it, so it seemed.

The McGaffney subscription was ended by a \$500 gift from "a friend." Old Terwilliger, who lived at the end of the street, was a comparative stranger in the town of Donaldson. He had lived there for 15 years. No one knew whence he had come. All that was known about him the banks knew. Every six months he made substantial deposits in the First National and in the Dime Savings bank. At the end of each six months the deposits dwindled to a cipher. The banks did not know where the money went—certainly old lean Terwilliger did not spend it on himself. And he had no vices, no luxuries. He was a plain, simple, unsophisticated old man. But the eyes of Editor Bartlett always twinkled when the name of Terwilliger was spoken, and sometimes moistened. Then they would harden when he thought of Cradlebaugh.

"What a difference between two men," he thought to himself. "Cradlebaugh, a blatant, ostentatious egotist; Terwilliger, a gentle, shrinking-tan."
But if Terwilliger had a secret, and if Bartlett knew it, he never divulged it to his best friend.

And as time went on, and the charity lists in the Donaldson Daily multiplied, it was invariably Cradlebaugh who headed the list—with a dollar; and it was invariably "Constant Reader," or "Pro Bono," or "A Friend" who closed it out—with hundreds.

But the small town of Donaldson never knew what fate had in store for her. She had given bounteously to all her neighbors. She little knew how much she would need charity herself.

It was the Widow McGaffney who started it. By night the rising little town of Donaldson lay in ruins—ruins black and stark and uncompromising. Donaldson was a city without a home. Yes, there was one home that escaped. It was Jim Cradlebaugh's big house, upon the hill. And there was another home—the home men seek in their extremity. The Donaldson First church was unscathed.

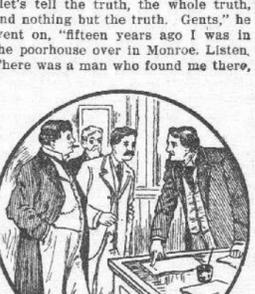
But with the morning and rising sun hope grew. The banks reported their vaults were safe. And the insurance companies wired that they would pay Donaldson losses immediately. And all that the people needed was food, temporary shelter—just the bare necessities of life.

"We'll supply those ourselves," cried Bartlett to the crowd; "come in to the church."
Cradlebaugh was nowhere to be seen. The rumor grew that Cradlebaugh was keeping to himself, in comfort, up in his big house on the hill. Others, who had, perforce, sheltered themselves there during the night, had not seen him. At any rate, he was not among the crowd in the church.

Bartlett told the people just how things stood. He knew the town. He knew its needs.
"This is business," he said; "fully a third of us are very well-to-do. We've saved money. Two-thirds of us have been living from hand to mouth. The one-third must rise to the occasion. Gentlemen," he added earnestly, "this

is a thing that will make the rich poor; but it's real—it's real—it's real." The crowd felt it. Bartlett prepared a dozen subscription lists and sent them through the crowd.
"We'll pull through," he told himself, when he began to see results. "And Terwilliger. Terwilliger 'll give. Good old 'Pro Bono.' But—where is he?"
Almost as he spoke Terwilliger, a lean, straggling old man, entered the church, and struggled up the aisle.
He seated himself at the foot of the stairs just below the pulpit. He waited hours until the lists were all in. Then Bartlett stepped to his side.
"I want something from 'A Friend,'" he ventured.
Terwilliger took the list and scribbled something at the bottom. Bartlett looked at it, and shouted aloud with glee.
"Hurrah, boys," he yelled, "here's something worth seeing. Listen while I read. The last name on the list: 'From a fellow townsman, \$30,000.'"
"Now," he cried, "I'm going to tell at last—'tis from Mr. Terwilliger here. That's who it is. The man of this town—the man who gives every time, all the time, who—"

But Terwilliger was up beside him in the pulpit, holding his arm.
"Wait, wait," cried Terwilliger, in a thin, shrill, piping voice, but a voice quivering with earnestness—"wait." He turned to the audience.
"If the truth's to be told," he said, "let's tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Gents," he went on, "fifteen years ago I was in the poorhouse over in Monroe. Listen. There was a man who found me there,



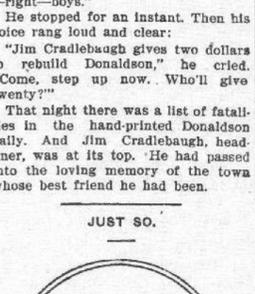
"Come Now, Put Your Names In."

and who brought me over here—a man with a big hearty smile on his face, and a big warm hand, and a big warm heart. Gents, he—he supported me. He made me live in comfort. But, gents, he—old Terwilliger smiled in spite of himself—"he was a joker—such a joker. And I didn't mind so much. But his heart—that man would give, give, give all he had for the poor, the sick, the stricken. But, gents, he was a man who would never let his left hand know what his right hand was doing. He gave through me." Old Terwilliger became terribly earnest. "Gents," he went on, "yesterday, in the fire, I was in my second-story back-room in a closet. I was shut off by the fire. There was no hope for me. But—he, this man with the big heart. He found me. He rescued me. I'm safe. But he—he's up in his big house." Terwilliger's voice quivered. "Only the doctor knows. He's burned, that man. And he ain't a-goin' to get well. Gents," he cried aloud, "that man is the man you never knew, who wouldn't let you know him, whose left hand didn't know his own right hand. Gents, that man was—Cradlebaugh. He gives the thirty thousand, as he gave all he ever gave—unbeknown—through me."

The crowd was silent for a moment. Bartlett led the cheering, then led the way silently out of the church, and up the steep hill toward the house of Cradlebaugh.
The town was almost too late. The doctor shook his head as the committee forced its way on tiptoe into the room of Cradlebaugh.
"He'll never speak again," the doctor said. But he was mistaken. Cradlebaugh had heard them. He struggled painfully up on his elbow.
"Boys, boys," he cried, "you've come for me—to get up—a list. It's—all—right—boys."
He stopped for an instant. Then his voice rang loud and clear:
"Jim Cradlebaugh gives two dollars to rebuild Donaldson," he cried. "Come, step up now. Who'll give twenty?"

That night there was a list of fatalities in the hand-printed Donaldson daily. And Jim Cradlebaugh, headliner, was at its top. He had passed into the loving memory of the town whose best friend he had been.

JUST SO.



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"And no matter how poor you are, you can get all the unhappiness you want for nothing."

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