

Adventures of a Deserter

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“Adventures of a Deserter” by Jan Overduin. Published by William B. Eerdmans Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1966

The Rev. J. Overduin is a minister in the Reformed Church of the Netherlands. He is a well-known radio speaker and lecturer. He has written a number of other books including: *Het Onaantastbare (The Un-touchable)*, *Tact en Contact (Tact and Contact)*, *Venster op het Leven (Window Upon Life)*.

This book, translated from the Dutch by Harry Van Dyke, is well written in the style and idiom of our modern age. The author is as familiar with the Book of Jonah as he is with the modern world. In fact, he implies that the experiences of Jonah apply most directly to us in the modern world. Anyone who shirks his duty is, to Overduin, a Jonah—a deserter.

Overduin reveals that he not only knows Jonah, but he also shows keen insight into the heart of all fallen human natures. Much of this insight he gained while his homeland, the Netherlands, was occupied by the Nazi German armies in World War II. For example, he writes:

“Prior to the Second World War a considerable number of pastors in Holland preached with tremendous courage and defiance Hitler and National Socialism. One of them announced in advance to his congregation that he would be the first to swing from a telephone pole once the German hordes crossed the border.... But when Hitler came, the prophesying ceased and the telephone pole remained simply a telephone pole. Then his theme became: adjust, conform, accommodate, in order to “understand the new times” and to “bow under God’s providential order” –pious words which had to cover up the ugliness of a base cowardice.” (pg. 13)

The book is replete with similar examples.

Because the book follows closely the Scriptural narrative and because it is simply written, this book is highly recommended for young people. But read with discretion since books written by men, even Christian men are tainted with sin.

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