

NOTES ON THE BOOK OF GENESIS

by

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CHAPTER SIX - NINE

We have now arrived at a deeply-important and strongly marked division of our book. Enoch has passed off the Scene. His walk, as a stranger on earth, has terminated in his translation to Heaven. He was taken away before human evil had risen to a head, and, therefore, before the divine judgment had been poured out.

How little influence his course and translation had upon the world is manifest from the first two verses of Chapter 6. **“And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.”**

The mingling of that which is of God with that Which is of man is a special form of evil, and a very effectual engine, in Satan’s hand, for marring the testimony of Christ on the earth.

This mingling may frequently wear the appearance of something very desirable; it may often look like a wider promulgation of that which is of God,- a fuller and a more vigorous outgoing of a divine influence, as something to be rejoiced in rather than to be deplored: but our judgment as to this will depend entirely upon the point of view from which we contemplate it.

If we look at it in the light of God’s presence, we cannot possibly imagine that an advantage is gained when the people of God mingle themselves with the children of this world; or when the truth of God is corrupted by human admixture.

Such is not the divine method of promulgating truth, or of advancing the interests of those, who ought to occupy the place of witnesses for Him on the earth. Separation from all evil is God’s principle; and this principle can never be infringed without serious damage to the truth.

In the narrative now before us, we see that the union of the sons of God with the daughters of men led to the most disastrous consequences. True, the fruit of that union seemed exceedingly fair, in man’s judgment, as we read, **“the same became mighty men, which were of old, men of renown;”** yet, God’s judgment was quite different. He seeth not as man seeth. His thoughts are not as ours. **“God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”**

Such was man's condition before God,- "**evil only,**" "**evil continually.**"

So much for the mingling of the holy with the profane. Thus it must ever be. If the holy seed will not maintain its purity, all must be forfeited, as regards testimony on the earth. Satan's first effort was to frustrate God's purpose, by putting the holy seed to death; and when that failed, he sought to gain his end by corrupting it.

Now, it is of the deepest moment that my reader should clearly understand the aim, the character, and the result of this union between "**the sons of God**" and "**the daughters of men.**"

There is great danger, at the present day, of compromising truth for the sake or union.

This should be carefully guarded against. There can be no true union attained at the expense of truth.

The true Christian's motto should ever be to "maintain truth at all cost; if union can be promoted in this way, so much the better; but maintain the truth."

The principle of expediency, on the contrary, may be thus enunciated:- "Promote union at all cost; if truth can be maintained as well, so much the better; but promote union."

This latter principle can only be carried out at the expense of all that is divine in the way of testimony. *

*** We should ever bear in mind, that "the wisdom which is from above is first pure, then peaceable" (James 3:17). The wisdom which is from beneath would put "peaceable" first and, therefore, it can never be pure.**

There can, evidently, be no true testimony where truth is forfeited; and hence, in the case of the antediluvian world, we see that the unhallowed union between the holy and the profane- between that which was divine and that which was human- only had the effect of bringing the evil to a head, and then God's judgment was poured out.

"The Lord said, I will destroy man."

Nothing less would do.

There must be the entire destruction of that which had corrupted God's way on the earth. "**The mighty men, and men of renown,**" must all be swept away, without distinction. "**All flesh**" must be set aside, as utterly unfit for God.

"The end of all flesh is come before me."

It was not merely the end of some flesh; no, it was all corrupt, in the sight of the Lord,- all irrecoverably bad. It had been tried, and found wanting; and the Lord announces His remedy to Noah in these words, "**Make thee an ark of gopher wood.**"

Thus was Noah put in possession of God's thoughts about the scene around him. The effect of the Word of God was to lay bare the roots of all that which man's eye might rest upon with complacency and pride.

The human heart might swell with pride, and the bosom heave with emotion, as the eye ran down along the brilliant ranks of men of art, men of skill, "**men of might,**" and "**men of renown.**"

The sound of the harp and the organ might send a thrill through the whole soul, while, at the same time, the ground was cultivated, and man's necessities were provided for in such a way as to contradict every thought in reference to approaching judgment. But, oh! those solemn words, "**I will destroy!**"

What a heavy gloom they would necessarily cast over the glittering scene! Could not man's genius invent some way of escape? Could not "**the mighty man deliver himself by his much strength?**" Alas, no: there was one way of escape, but it was revealed to faith, not to sight,- not to reason,- not to imagination.

"By faith Noah, being warned of God, of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." (Hebrews 11:7).

The Word of God brings his light to shine upon all that by which man's heart is deceived.

It removes, completely, the gilding with which the serpent covers a vain, deceitful, passing world, over which hangs the sword of divine judgment. But it is only "**faith**" that will be "**warned of God,**" when the things of which he speaks are "**not seen as yet.**"

Nature is governed by what it sees,- it is governed by its senses. Faith is governed by the pure Word of God; (inestimable treasure in this dark world) this gives stability, let outward appearances be what they may.

When God spoke to Noah of judgment impending, there was no sign of it. It was "**not seen as yet;**" but the Word of God made it a present reality for the heart that was enabled to mix that word with faith. Faith does not wait to see a thing, ere it believes, for "**faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.**"

All that the man of faith needs, is to know that God has spoken; this imparts perfect certainty to his soul.

"Thus saith the Lord," settles everything.

A single line of sacred Scripture is an abundant answer to all the reasonings and all the imaginations of the human mind; and when one has the Word of God as the basis of His convictions, he may calmly stand against the full tide of human opinion and prejudice.

It was the Word of God which sustained the heart of Noah during his long course of service; and the same word has sustained the millions of God's saints from that day to this, in the face of the world's contradiction. Hence, we cannot set too high a value upon the Word of God. Without it, all is dark and uncertainty; with it, all is light and peace. Where it shines, it marks out for the man of God a sure and blessed path; where it shines not, one is left to wander amid the bewildering mazes of human tradition.

How could Noah have "**preached righteousness**" for 120 years if he had not had the Word of God as the ground of his preaching? How could he have withstood the scoffs and sneers of an infidel world? How could he have persevered in testifying of "**judgment to come**," when not a cloud appeared on the world's horizon?

Impossible.

The Word of God was the ground on which he stood, and "**the Spirit of Christ**" enabled him to occupy, with holy decision, that elevated and immovable ground.

And now, my beloved Christian reader, what else have we wherewith to stand, in service for Christ, in an evil day, like the present? Surely, nothing; nor do we want aught else. The Word of God, and the Holy Ghost, by whom alone that word can be understood, applied, or used, are all we want to equip us perfectly to furnish us thoroughly - "**to all good works**," under whatever head those works may range themselves. (II Timothy 3:16, 17).

What rest for the heart! What relief from all Satan's imagery, and man's imaginations! God's pure, incorruptible, eternal word! May our hearts adore him for the inestimable treasure! "**Every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually**;" but God's word was the simple resting-place of Noah's heart.

"God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me . . . Make thee an ark of gopher wood."

Here was man's ruin, and God's remedy.

Man had been allowed to pursue his career to the utmost limit, to bring his principles and ways to maturity. The leaven had worked and filled the mass. The evil had reached its climax.

"**All flesh**" had become so bad that it could not be worse; wherefore nothing remained but for God to destroy it totally; and, at the same time, to save all those who should be found, according to his eternal counsels, linked with "**the eighth person**,"- the only righteous man then existing.

This brings out the doctrine of the Cross in a very vivid manner.

There we find at once God's judgment of nature with all its evil; and, at the same time. The revelation of his saving grace, in all its fulness, and in all its perfect adaptation to those who have really reached the lowest point of their moral condition, as judged by himself.

“The Day-spring from on high hath visited us” (Luke 1:78). Where? Just where we are, as sinners. God has come down to the very deepest depths of our ruin. There is not a point in all the sinner’s state to which the light of that blessed Day-spring has not penetrated; but, if it has thus penetrated, it must, by virtue of what it is, reveal our true character. The light must judge everything contrary to itself; but, while it does so, it also **“gives the knowledge of salvation unto his people through the remission of their sins.”**

The Cross, while it reveals God’s judgment upon **“all flesh,”** reveals his salvation for the lost and guilty sinner.

- Sin is perfectly judged,
- the sinner perfectly saved,
- God perfectly revealed, and perfectly glorified, in the Cross.

If my reader will turn for a moment to the First Epistle of Peter, he will find much light thrown upon this entire subject.

At the third chapter, verse 18, we read, **“for Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which (Spirit) he went and preached (through Noah) to the spirits (now) in prison; which once were disobedient, when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water . . . baptism doth also now save us, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, (as by water,) * but the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who, having gone into Heaven, is at the right hand of God, angels, and authorities, and powers. being made subject to him.”**

*** “It is impossible to over-estimate the wisdom of the Holy Ghost, as seen in the way in which he treats the ordinance of baptism, in the above remarkable passage. We know the evil use which has been made of baptism; we know the false place it has gotten in the thoughts of many; we know how that the efficacy, which belongs only to the Blood of Christ, has been attributed to the water of baptism; we know how the regenerating grace of the Holy Ghost has been transferred to water baptism; and, with the knowledge of all this, we cannot but be struck with the way in which the Spirit of God guards the subject, by stating, that it is not the mere washing away of the filth of the flesh, as by water, “but the answer of a good conscience toward God;” which “answer” we get, not by baptism, how important soever it may be, as an ordinance of the kingdom, but “by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,” “who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.”**

Baptism, I need hardly say, as an ordinance of divine institution, and in its divinely-appointed place, is most important and deeply significant; but when we find men, in one way or another, putting the figure in place of the substance, we are bound to expose the wiles of Satan by the light of the Word of God.

This is a most important passage. It sets the doctrine of the ark and its connection with the death of Christ very distinctly before us.

As in the Deluge, so in the death of Christ, all the billows and waves of divine judgment passed over that which, in itself, was without sin. The creation was buried beneath the flood of the Lord's righteous wrath; and the Spirit of Christ exclaims, "**All thy billows and thy waves have gone over me.**" (Psalm 42:7).

Here is a profound truth for the heart and conscience of a believer.

"**All God's billows and waves**" passed over the spotless person of the Lord Jesus, when he hung upon the Cross; and, as a most blessed consequence, not one of them remains to pass over the person of the believer.

At Calvary we see, in good truth, "**the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of Heaven opened.**" "**Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts.**" Christ drank the cup, and endured the wrath perfectly. He put himself, judicially, under the full weight of all His people's liabilities, and gloriously discharged them. The belief of this gives settled peace to the soul.

If the Lord Jesus has met all that could be against us, if he has removed out of the way every hindrance, if he has put away sin, if he has exhausted the cup of wrath and judgment on our behalf, if he has cleared the prospect of every cloud, should we not enjoy settled peace?

Unquestionably.

Peace is our unalienable portion. To us belong the deep and untold blessedness and holy security which redeeming love can bestow on the righteous ground of Christ's absolutely accomplished work.

Had Noah any anxiety about the billows of divine judgment? None whatever. How could he? He knows that "**all**" had been poured forth, while he himself was raised by those very outpoured billows into a region of cloudless peace. He floated in peace on that very water by which "**all flesh**" was judged. He was put beyond the reach of judgment; and put there, too, by God himself.

He might have said, in the triumphant language of Romans 8, "**If God be for us, who can be against us?**"

He had been invited in by the Lord himself, as we read in Chapter 7:1, "**Come thou and all thy house into the ark;**" and when he had taken his place there, we read, "**the Lord shut him in.**"

Here, assuredly, was full and perfect security for all within. The Lord kept the door, and no one could go in or out without him.

There was both a window and a door to the ark. The Lord secured, with his own omnipotent hand, the door, and left Noah the window, from which he might look upward to the place from whence all the judgment had emanated, and see that no judgment remained for him.

The saved family could only look upward, because the window was “**above.**” (Chapter 6:16).

They could not see the waters of judgment, nor the death and desolation which those waters had caused. God’s salvation - the “**gopher wood,**” stood between them and all these things. They had only to gaze upward into a cloudless Heaven,- the eternal dwelling-place of the One who had condemned the world, and saved them.

Nothing can more fully express the believer’s perfect security in Christ than those words, “**the Lord shut him in.**”

Who could open what God had shut? None. The family of Noah were as safe as God could make them. There was no power, angelic, human or diabolical, which could possibly burst open the door of the ark, and let the waters in. That door was shut by the self-same hand that had opened the windows of Heaven, and broken up the fountains of the great deep. Thus Christ is spoken of as the One “**that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth**” (Revelation 3:7). He also holds in his hand “**the keys of hell and of death**” (Revelation 1:18).

None can enter the portals of the grave, nor go forth therefrom, without him. He has “**all power in Heaven and on earth**” He is “**head over all things to the Church,**” and in Him the believer is perfectly secure (Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:22).

Who could touch Noah? What wave could penetrate that ark which was “**pitched within and without with pitch?**”

Just so now, who can touch those who have, by faith, retreated into the shadow of the Cross?

Every enemy has been met and silenced,- yes, silenced forever. The death of Christ has triumphantly answered every demur; while, at the same time, his resurrection is the satisfactory declaration of God’s infinite complacency in that work which is, at once, the basis of his righteousness in receiving us, and of our confidence in drawing nigh unto him.

Hence, therefore, the door of our ark being secured, by the hand of God himself, nothing remains for us but to enjoy the window; or, in other words, to walk in happy and holy communion with him who has saved us from coming wrath, and made us heirs and expectants of coming glory.

Peter speaks of those, who “**are blind, and cannot see afar off, and have forgotten that they were purged from their old sins**” (II Peter 1:9).

This is a lamentable condition for anyone to be in, and it is the sure result of not cultivating diligent, prayerful communion with him who has eternally shut us up in Christ.

Let us. now, ere we proceed further with Noah’s history, glance for a little at the condition of those to whom he had so long preached righteousness. We have been looking at the saved,- let us now look at the lost:- we have been thinking of those within the ark,- let us now think of those without.

No doubt, many an anxious look would be cast after the vessel of mercy, as it rose with the water; but, alas! **“the door was shut,”** the day of grace was over, the time of testimony closed, and that forever, so far as they were concerned.

The same hand which had shut Noah in; had shut them out, and it was as impossible for *those without to get in* as it was for *those within to get out*. The former were *irrecoverably lost*; the latter; *effectually saved*. The long-suffering of God, and the testimony of his servant, had both been slighted. Present things had engrossed them. **“They did eat, they drank, they married wives, and were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.”** (Luke 17:26, 27).

There was nothing wrong in any of these things, abstractedly looked at. The wrong was not in the things done, but in the doers of them. Every one of them might be done in the fear of the Lord, and to the glory of his holy name, were they only done in faith. But, alas! they were not so done.

The Word of God was rejected.

- He told of judgment; but they did not believe.
- He spoke of sin and ruin; but they were not convinced.
- He spoke of a remedy; but they would not give heed.

- They went on with their own plans and speculations, and had no room for God.
- They acted as if the earth belonged to them, by a lease, forever.
- They forgot that there was a clause of surrender.
- They thought not of that solemn **“until.”**

God was shut out. **“Every imagination of the thoughts of their heart was only evil continually;”** and hence, they could do nothing right. They thought, spake, and acted for themselves. They did their own pleasure, and forgot God.

And, my reader, remember the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. how he said, **“as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of man.”**

Some would have us to believe that ere the Son of man appears in the clouds of Heaven, this earth shall be covered, from pole to pole, with a fair mantle of righteousness!. They would teach us to look for a reign of righteousness and peace, as the result of agencies now in operation; but the brief passage just quoted cuts up by the roots, in a moment, all such vain and delusive expectations.

How was it in the days of Noah?

- Did righteousness cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea?
- Was God’s truth dominant?
- Was the earth filled with the knowledge of the Lord?

Scripture replies, “**the earth was filled with violence.**” “**All flesh had corrupted his way on the earth.**” “**The earth also was corrupt before God.**”

Well, then, “**so shall it be in the days of the Son of man.**”

This is plain enough. “**Righteousness**” and “**violence**” are not very like each other. Neither is there any similarity between universal wickedness and universal peace. It only needs a heart subject to the Word, and freed from the influence of preconceived opinions, in order to understand the true character of the days immediately preceding “**the coming of the Son of man.**”

Let not my reader be led astray. Let Him reverently bow to Scripture. Let him look at the condition of the world, “**in the days before the flood;**” and let him bear in mind, that “**as**” it was then, “so shall it be at the close of this present period. This is most simple,- most conclusive. There was nothing like a state of universal righteousness and peace then, neither shall there be anything like it by-and-by.

No doubt, man displayed abundant energy in making the world a comfortable and an agreeable place for himself; but that was a very different thing from making it a suitable place for God.

So also at this present time; man is as busy as he can be, in clearing the stones off the pathway of human life, and making it as smooth as possible; but this is not “**making straight in the desert a highway for our God;**” nor is it making “**the rough places smooth,**” that all flesh may see “**the salvation of the Lord.**”

Civilization prevails; but civilization is not righteousness.

The sweeping and garnishing are going forward; but it is not in order to fit the house for Christ, but for Antichrist. The wisdom of man is put forth in order to cover, with the folds of his own drapery, the blots and blemishes of humanity; out, though covered, they are not removed! They are underneath, and will, ere long, break out in more hideous deformity than ever. The painting of vermilion will soon be obliterated, and the carved cedar wood destroyed. The dams by which man sedulously seeks to stem the torrent of human wretchedness, must soon give way before the overwhelming force thereof.

All the efforts to confine the physical, the mental, and the moral degradation of Adam’s posterity within those enclosures, which human benevolence, if you please, has devised, must, in the sequel, prove abortive. The testimony has gone forth. “**The end of all flesh has come before me.**”

It has not come before man; but it has come before God: and, albeit, the voice of the scoffers may be heard, saying, “**Where is the promise of His coming? for, since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation;**” yet the moment is rapidly hastening on when those scoffers will get their answer.

“The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up” (II Peter 3:4-10.

This, my reader, is the answer to the intellectual scoffs of the children of this world, but not to the spiritual affections and expectations of the children of God. These latter, thank God, have a totally different prospect, even to meet the Bridegroom in the air, before evil shall have reached its culminating point, and, therefore, before the divine judgment shall be poured forth thereon. The Church of God looks not for the burning up of the world, but for the arising of **“the bright and morning Star.”**

Now, in whatever way we look at the future, from whatever point of view we contemplate it, whether the object, which presents itself to the soul’s vision be the Church in glory, or the world in flames, the coming of the Bridegroom, or the breaking in of the thief, the morning Star, or the scorching sun, the translation, or the deluge, we must feel the unspeakable importance of attending to God’s present testimony in grace, to lost sinners.

“Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” (II Corinthians 6:2). “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” (II Corinthians 5:19).

- He is reconciling now, he will be judging by-and-by;
- it is all grace now; it will be all wrath then;
- He is pardoning sin now, through the Cross; he will punish it then, in hell, and that forever.
- He is sending out a message of purest, richest, freest grace.
- He is telling sinners of an accomplished redemption through the precious sacrifice of Christ.
- He is declaring that all is done.
- He is willing to be gracious.

“The long-suffering of our Lord is salvation.” “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” (II Peter 3).

All this makes the present moment one of peculiar solemnity. Unmingled grace declared!- unmingled wrath impending!- How solemn! How deeply solemn!

And, then, with what profound interest should we mark the unfolding of the divine purposes!

Scripture sheds its light upon these things; and such a light, too, that we need not, as another has said, “vacantly stare on passing events, as those who know not where they are, and whither they are going.” We should accurately know our bearings. We should fully understand the direct tendency of all the principles now at work. We should be well aware of the vortex, toward which all the tributary streams are rapidly flowing on.

Men dream of a golden age; they promise themselves a millennium of the arts and sciences; they feed upon the thought, that “to-morrow shall be as this day, and more abundant.”

But, oh! how utterly vain are all those thoughts, dreams, and promises. Faith can see the clouds gathering thickly around the world's horizon. Judgment is coming. The day of wrath is at hand. The door will soon be shut. The "**strong delusion**" will soon set in with terrible intensity. How needful, then, it is to raise a warning voice.- to seek, by faithful testimony, to counteract man's pitiable self-complacency. True, in so doing, we shall be exposed, to the charge which Ahab brought against Micaiah, of always prophesying evil: but no matter for that. Let us prophesy what the Word of God prophesies, and let us do this simply for the purpose of "**persuading men.**"

The Word of God only removes from beneath our feet a hollow foundation, for the purpose of placing instead thereof a foundation which never can be moved.

- It only takes away from us a delusive hope, to give us, instead, "**a hope which maketh not ashamed.**"

- It takes away "**a broken reed,**" to give us the "**Rock of ages.**"

- It sets aside "**a broken cistern, which can hold no water,**" to set in its place "**the fountain of living waters.**"

This is true love. It is God's love. He will not cry "**peace, peace, when there is no peace;**" nor "**daub with untempered mortar.**"

He would have the sinner's heart resting sweetly in His own eternal Ark of safety, enjoying present communion with Himself, and fondly cherishing the hope, that, when all the ruin, the desolation, and the judgment have passed away, it shall rest with him in a restored creation.

We shall now return to Noah, and contemplate him in a new position.

We have seen him building the ark, we have seen him in the ark, and we shall now view him going forth of the ark, and taking his place in the new world.* "**And God remembered Noah.**"

*** I would here mention, for my reader's prayerful consideration, a thought very familiar to the minds of those who have specially given themselves to the study of what is called, "dispensational truth." It has reference to Enoch and Noah The former was taken away, as we have seen, before the judgment came; whereas the latter was carried through the judgment. Now, it is thought that Enoch is a figure of the Church, which shall be taken away before human evil reaches its climax. and before the divine judgment falls thereon. Noah, on the other hand, is a figure of the remnant of Israel, who shall be brought through the deep waters of affliction, and through the fiery judgment, and led into the full enjoyment of millennial bliss, in virtue of God's everlasting Covenant. I may add, that I quite receive this thought in reference to those two Old Testament fathers. I consider that it has the full support of the general scope and analogy of Holy Scripture.**

The strange work of judgment being over, the saved family, and all in association with them, come into remembrance.

“God made a wind to pass over the earth; and the waters assuaged; the fountains also of the deep and the windows of Heaven were stopped, and the rain from Heaven was restrained.”

The beams of the sun now begin to act upon a world that had been baptized with a baptism of judgment.

Judgment is God’s **“strange work.”** He delights not in, though he is glorified by, it. Blessed be his name, he is ever ready to leave the place of judgment, and enter that of mercy, because he delights in mercy.

“And it came to pass, at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made: and he sent forth a raven, which went forth, to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth.”

The unclean bird made its escape, and found, no doubt, a resting-place upon some floating carcass. It sought not the ark again. Not so the dove. **“She found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark . . . and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark: and the dove came in to him, in the evening: and, lo, in her mouth was an olive-leaf, pluckt off.”**

Sweet emblem of the renewed mind, which, amid the surrounding desolation, seeks and finds its rest and portion in Christ; and not only so, but also lays hold of the earnest of the inheritance, and furnishes the blessed proof, that judgment has passed away, and that a renewed earth is coming fully into view.

The carnal mind, on the contrary, can rest in anything and everything but Christ.

- It can feed upon all uncleanness.
- **“The olive-leaf”** has no attraction for it.
- It can find all it needs in a Scene of death, and hence is not occupied with the thought of a new world and its glories;

but the heart that is taught and exercised by the Spirit of God, can only rest and rejoice in that in which he rests and rejoices. It rests in the Ark of his salvation **“until the times of the restitution of all things.”**

May it be thus with you and me, beloved reader!

May Jesus be the abiding rest and portion of our hearts, that so we may not seek them in a world which is under the judgment of God!

The dove went back to Noah, and waited for his time of rest; and we should ever find our place with Christ, until the time of his exaltation, and glory, in the ages to come. **“He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry.”**

All we want, as to this, is a little patience. May God direct our hearts into his love, and into **“the patience of Christ!”**

“And God spake unto Noah saying, Go forth of the ark.”

The same God that had said, **“Make thee an ark”** and **“Come thou into the ark,”** now says, **“Go forth of the ark.” “And Noah went forth . . . and builded an altar unto the Lord.”**

All is simple obedience. There is the obedience of faith and the worship of faith: both go together. The altar is erected, where, just before, all had been a scene of death and judgment.

The ark had borne Noah and his family safely over the waters of judgment. It had carried him from the old into the new world, where he now takes his place as a worshipper. *

*** It is interesting to look at this entire subject of the ark and deluge, in connection with that most important and deeply significant ordinance of baptism. A truly baptized person, that is, one who, as the apostle says “But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you,” is one, who has passed from the old world into the new, in spirit and principle, and by faith. The water rolls over his person, signifying that his old man is buried, that his place in nature is ignored, that his old nature is entirely set aside: in short, that he is a dead man. When he is plunged beneath the water, expression is given to the fact that his name, place, and existence, in nature, are put out of sight; that the flesh, with all that pertained thereto, its sins, its iniquities, its liabilities, is buried in the grave of Christ, and never can come into God’s sight again.**

Again, when he rises up out of the water, expression is given to the truth, that he only comes up as the possessor of a new life, even the resurrection life of Christ. If Christ had not been raised from the dead, the believer could not come up out of the water, but should remain buried beneath its surface, as the simple expression of the place which righteously belongs to nature. But, inasmuch as Christ rose from the dead, in the power of a new life, having entirely put away our sins, we also come up out of the water; and, in so doing, set forth the fact, that we are put, by the grace of God, and through the death of Christ, in full possession of a new life, to which divine righteousness inseparably attaches. “We are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” (See Romans 6 and Colossians 2 passim. Comp. also I Peter 3:18-22). All this makes the institution of baptism one of immense importance, and pregnant with meaning.

And, be it observed, it was **“unto the Lord”** he erected his altar. Superstition would have worshipped the ark, as being the means of salvation. It is ever the tendency of the heart to displace God by his ordinances. Now, the ark was a very marked and manifest ordinance; but Noah’s faith passed beyond the ark to the God of the ark; and hence, when he stepped out of it, instead of casting back a lingering look at it, or regarding it as an object of worship or veneration, he built an altar unto the Lord, and worshipped him: and the ark is never heard of again.

This teaches us a very simple, but, at the same time, a very seasonable lesson.

The moment the heart lets slip the reality of God himself, there is no placing a limit to its declension; it is on the highway to the grossest forms of idolatry. In the judgment of faith, an ordinance is only valuable as it conveys God, in living power, to the soul; that is to say, so long as faith can enjoy Christ therein, according to his own appointment.

Beyond this, it is worth just nothing; and if it in the smallest degree comes between the heart and his precious work and his glorious person, it ceases to be an ordinance of God, and becomes an instrument of the devil.

In the judgment of superstition, the ordinance is everything, and God is shut out; and the name of God is only made use of to exalt the ordinance, and give it a deep hold of the human heart, and a mighty influence over the human mind.

Thus it was that the children of Israel worshipped the brazen serpent. That, which had once been a channel of blessing to them, because used of God, became, when their hearts had departed from the Lord, an object of superstitious veneration; and Hezekiah had to break it in pieces and call it “**a piece of brass.**” In itself it was only “*Nehushtan,*” but, when used of God, it was a means of fresh blessing.

Now faith owned it to be what divine revelation said it was; but superstition, throwing, as it ever does, divine revelation overboard, lost the real purpose of God in the thing, and actually made a god of the thing itself. (See 2 Kings 18:4).

And, my reader, is there not a deep lesson in all this for the present age? I am convinced there is.

We live in an age of ordinances.

The atmosphere which enwraps the professing church, is impregnated with the elements of a traditionary religion, which robs the soul of Christ, and his divinely full salvation. It is not that human traditions boldly deny that there is such a person as Christ, or such a thing as the Cross of Christ: were they to do so, the eyes of many might be opened. However, it is not thus.

The evil is of a far more insidious and dangerous character.

Ordinances are added to Christ, and the work of Christ.

The sinner is not saved by Christ alone, but by Christ and ordinances. thus he is robbed of Christ altogether; for it will, assuredly, be found that Christ and ordinances will prove, in the sequel, to be ordinances, and not Christ.

This is a, solemn consideration for all who stand up for a religion of ordinances. “**If ye be circumcised Christ shall profit you nothing.**”

It must be Christ wholly, or not at all.

The devil persuades men, that they are honoring Christ when they make much of his ordinances; whereas, all the while he knows full well that they are, in reality, setting Christ entirely aside, and deifying the ordinance.

I would only repeat here a remark which I have made elsewhere, namely, that superstition makes everything of the ordinance; infidelity, profanity, and mysticism, make nothing of it; faith sees it according to divine appointment.

But I have already extended this section far beyond the limit which I had prescribed for it.

I shall, therefore, close it with a hasty glance at the contents of Chapter 9.

In it we have the new covenant, under which creation was set, after the Deluge, together with the token of that covenant. **“And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.”**

Observe, God’s command to man, on his entrance into the restored earth, was to refill that earth; not parts of the earth, but the earth.

He desired to have men dispersed abroad, over the face of the world, and not relying upon their own concentrated energies. We shall see, in Chapter 40, how man neglected all this.

The fear of man is now lodged in the heart of every other creature. Henceforth the service, rendered by the inferior orders of creation to man, must be the constrained result of fear and dread. In life, and in death, the lower animals were to be at the service of man. All creation is delivered, by God’s everlasting covenant, from the fear of a second deluge. Judgment is never again to take that shape.

“The world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished; but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”

The earth was once purged with water; and it will be again purged by fire; and in this second purgation none will escape, save those, who have fled for refuge to him who has passed through the deep waters of death, and met the fire of divine judgment.

“And God said, This is the token of the covenant . . . I do set my bow in the cloud . . . and I will remember my covenant.”

The whole creation rests, as to its exemption from a second deluge, on the eternal stability of God’s covenant, of which the bow is the token; and it is happy to bear in mind, that when the bow appears, the eye of God rests upon it; and man is cast, not upon his own imperfect and most uncertain memory, but upon God’s.

“**I,**” says God, “**will remember.**”

How sweet to think of what God will, and what he will not, remember! He will remember his own covenant, but he will not remember his people’s sins. The Cross, which ratifies the former, puts away the latter. The belief of this gives peace to the troubled heart and uneasy conscience.

“**And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud.**”

Beautiful and most expressive emblem!

The beams of the sun, reflected from that which threatens judgment, tranquillize the heart, as telling of God’s covenant, God’s salvation, and God’s remembrance. Precious, most precious sunbeams, deriving additional beauty from the very cloud which reflects them!

How forcibly does this bow in the cloud remind us of Calvary. There we see a cloud indeed,- a dark, thick, heavy cloud of judgment, discharging itself upon the sacred head of the Lamb of God,- a cloud so dark, that even at mid-day “**there was darkness over all the earth.**”

But, blessed be God, faith discerns, in that heaviest cloud that ever gathered, the most brilliant and beautiful bow that ever appeared; for it sees the bright beams of God’s eternal love darting through the awful gloom, and reflected in the cloud.

It hears, too, the words, “**It is finished,**” issuing from amid the darkness, and in those words it recognizes the perfect ratification of God’s everlasting covenant, not only with creation, but with the tribes of Israel and the Church of God.

The last paragraph of this chapter presents a humiliating spectacle.

The lord of the new earth fails to govern himself:.

“**And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard; and he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent.**”

What a condition for Noah, the only righteous man, the preacher of righteousness, to be found in! Alas! what is man?

Look at him where you will, and you see only failure.

- in Eden, he fails;
- in the restored earth, he fails;
- in Canaan, he fails;
- in the Church, he fails;
- in the presence of millennial bliss and glory, he fails.

He fails everywhere, and in all things: there is no good thing in him.

Let his advantages be ever so great, his privileges ever so vast, his position ever so desirable, he can only exhibit failure and sin.

We must, however, look at Noah in two ways, namely, *as a type*, and *as a man*, and while the type is full of beauty and meaning, the man is full of sin and folly; yet the Holy Ghost has written these words, “**Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generation; and Noah walked with God.**”

Divine grace had covered all his sins, and clothed his person with a spotless robe of righteousness.

Though Noah exposed his nakedness, God did not see it, for he looked not at him in the weakness of his own condition, but in the full power of divine and everlasting righteousness.

Hence we may see how entirely astray - how totally alienated from God and his thoughts - Ham was in the course he adopted; he evidently knew nothing of the blessedness of the man whose iniquity is forgiven and his sin covered. On the contrary, Shem and Japheth exhibit in their conduct a fine specimen of the divine method of dealing with human nakedness; wherefore they inherit the blessing, whereas Ham inherits a curse.

~ end of chapters 6-9 ~

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