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LENA G. GREENE, April 13, 1899, New York, N.Y.

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Dr. J. C. AYER, Lowell, Mass.

**The Sabbath School.**

**INTERNATIONAL LESSON.**

Third Quarter Lesson 3 July 21 1901

**NOAH SAVED IN THE ARK.**

—Genesis 8: 1-22

Print Verses 15-22.

**GOLDEN TEXT—Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.—Gen. 6: 8**

**HISTORICAL SETTING.**

*Time.*—According to Usser's Chronology, the flood was ended 2348 B. C., or 1,656 years after the creation of Adam. (It is, of course, understood that these dates are not authoritative in any way; but are used to give some idea of the course of events. It is probable that the deluge was earlier than this date.)

*Place.*—This ark rested somewhere on the mountains of Ararat, which extends through Armenia to the southwest. It is not the high peak now called Ararat, but the mountainous region known as Ararat.

**SOME RESULTS OF THE FALL, EXEMPLIFIED IN THE EARLY AGES OF MAN.**—A period had followed the fall, in which many men had grown wicked, and deeds of violence and crime filled the earth, and "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." "The earth also was corrupt before God." Cain was among the first of these evil-doers, but the world was becoming a race of Cain.

On the other hand, there were good men, sons of God, such as righteous Abel, and Enoch later on in the history. He "walked with God."

This band of true worshippers seem to have grown smaller and smaller till at last it was represented by only one family, that of Noah.

**THE GREAT PROBLEM: WHAT TO DO WITH WICKED MEN.**—There were four possible ways of treating this condition of things:—

1. To let it continue with the same influences of good and evil as had been working for many centuries. There was danger that the whole population would thus be destroyed by their own violence and vice.
2. God could destroy the whole race at once, and leave the earth bare.
3. God could take away their free choice, but then they would no longer be men.
4. He could destroy the wicked by some act which would be a perpetual warning, and preserving the good could start the race afresh, with hope, through a long discipline and many failures, of becoming the kingdom of God.

**BUILDING THE ARK.**—Noah, the grandson of Enoch, also walked with God. He was a virtuous, pious man, in a world ruining itself with wickedness. He was a preacher of righteousness. It is not probable that he was popular with men, but he was in favor with God. God warned the people 120 years beforehand, that a flood would come and destroy them on account of their wickedness. And Noah was commanded to build a great ark for the salvation of himself and family, and doubtless for any others who would believe and repent.

The Ark. The ark was not a ship, meant to sail, but a long, oblong building meant to float with the tides. The length was 300 cubits (about 500 feet), the width, 50 cubits (80 feet), the height, 30 cubits (50 feet). When we consider the immense engineering skill in building the pyramids whose date is very early, there is nothing incredible in the building of this great vessel. The ark was built of gopher wood, probably cypress, a tall, straight evergreen tree. This wood is almost incorruptible. It is said that the gates of St Peter's Church at Rome (made of this wood), which lasted from the time of Constantine to that of Eugene IV, i. e., 1,100 years, had in that period suffered decay. The ark was made watertight by a covering of asphalt which abounded in Assyria.

The window was an open space, or row of openings, one cubit in height, running all around the ark, under the eaves, for light and air. The method of speaking of the animals that were taken into the ark, "clean and unclean," implies that chiefly those which were useful to man were preserved.

When the time came, Noah and his family entered the ark, and the door was shut.

**THE DELUGE.**—There is every reason to believe that this catastrophe was co-extensive with the human population of the world.

The fact that traditions of the flood are found in nearly all nations points to some great, real, and well-defined event in the ancient history of the race at its very beginning. The traditions of the deluge are almost universal. Lenormant says they are found in all races except the black race. There are stories in China, India, Persia, among the native Indians of America, and the natives of the Pacific Island.

**THE RESTORATION, AND A NEW START IN LIFE.**—Vs. 1-22. Noah remained in the ark for a whole year. At the end of five months the ark grounded on the high lands of Ararat. In four or five months more the waters had decreased so that the tops of the hills could be seen. At length Noah sent out first a raven, which did not return, for it could live on carrion. Then he sent a dove, which, at the second time, returned with an olive branch in its beak, which has been used as a beautiful symbol of rest and peace. At the end of a year *God spoke to Noah. Go forth out of the ark.* He went in obedience to the divine command, and the new life of man began on earth. The promise that the race should not a sin be destroyed by a flood is a promise that the race should never be so sad again. *And Noah builded an ark.* His first work was for worship and religion. He owed gratitude and love and worship to God, for his wonderful preservation. And true religion must ever lie at the basis of the progress of man. He instituted that which would save the race from growing so wicked as to require another flood, and which working through the ages would effect the perfect redemption of man.

**The Promise and its Covenant.** *The Lord said in his heart.* He made it part of his plan. In confirmation of this promise God set his rainbow in the cloud. It was not its first appearance, but was probably a familiar sight. But he constituted it the sign of his covenant, visible to all nations, and intelligible to all minds, just as afterwards the familiar rite of baptism and the customary use of bread and wine were by our Blessed Lord ordained to be the tokens and pledges of the new covenant in Christ: between his heavenly Father and every Christian soul.

**Other Safeguards.** 1. The first was the death penalty for murder. God built the death penalty around human life to guard it, and to magnify its value, and to check the spirit of violence in man.

2. They were permitted to use animals for food. This plan is better for man. It was the means of more happiness to animals. It was necessary to protect man against being destroyed by wild animals. It is said that if every egg of a codfish should live and grow up, the ocean would be solid full of codfish in ten years.

**BEACON LIGHTS FROM THE ARK.**—1. When men are so bad that all influences to make them better are in vain, then God lets destruction come upon them.

2. God punishes men because he loves them. The flood that destroyed most of the people was the real salvation of the human race. God warned and entreated the people to repent, by his Holy Spirit, by the preaching of a good man, and by his living example.
3. They can blame only themselves for their punishment. Every lost soul is a moral suicide. Itself turned the key that shut it out from paradise.

**Good Men in Bad Times.** 1. Even in the worst of times there are some good and true men.—Noah in a lost world; seven thousand with E'ijah when he thought there were none.

2. The evil in the world is no excuse for our being wicked.
3. The proof and test of goodness is that it can stand firm and true amid great wickedness.
4. The source of goodness in bad times is faith in God.
5. Good men in bad times are to preach righteousness by word and example.
6. It is love, and not cruelty, that leads them to warn men of the wrath to come. The warning bell does not create the fire, but saves from the fire.
7. God never forgets those who serve him in bad times.

**Salvation by the Ark.** 1. God has prepared a way of salvation large enough for every one who will come.

2. But each one who will be saved must do something himself. Noah built the ark in which he escaped. He built it by divine direction, after the divine pattern.
3. They do not build for themselves alone. They want all men to be saved.
4. Many ridicule the workers on the ark and despise all warnings, till the evil day comes when it is too late to enter. "And the door was shut."
5. Men may help build the ark, and yet not themselves enter into it and be saved.

**Illustration.** A minister once said to the unconverted librarian of his Sunday school, "What became of Noah's carpenters?" The young man was surprised, and did not at once perceive the purpose of the question; but, after a week's thinking, gave his heart to Christ.

6. The story of the deluge is the story of a great cleansing. A taking away of men, that man upon the earth might make a new beginning.

**THE BOW OF PROMISE.**—1. God makes a covenant with his children, in order to comfort and strengthen them; and they should make a covenant with God, from their inmost hearts.

2. On the very clouds and storms of life God writes his law of promise. There is light and peace for all who will look up.

**Some Strange Things Worth Knowing.**

It has been said that the bee will travel as far as twelve miles in search of honey, but beekeepers say this statement is absurd. They claim that it may occasionally fly five or six miles, but as a usual rule bees must find their supplies within two miles or so of home, otherwise they will die.

The figure of a fish was a well-known emblem among the early Christians, and the name was often used as a countersign, when secret meetings were held. It has been found engraved on sea's and tombs, and small ornaments in the form of fishes were worn about the neck. The symbol was chosen because the Greek word for fishes is made up of Greek words which mean, Jesus Christ, of God the Son, the Saviour.

Spiders are met within the forests of Java whose webs are so strong that it requires a knife to cut through them, we are told. A spider weighing four pounds, which has taken up her residence in a cathedral at Munich, regales herself with a large supply of lamp oil. A Texas spider weaves a balloon four feet long and two feet wide, which she fastens to a tree by a single thread, then marches on board with her half dozen little ones, cuts the thread, and away goes the iriship to some distant point on the prairie.

Hundreds of thousands of nests are built every year in trees and heiges. What becomes of all these homes after the birds have flitted from them at summer's end? asks Cassell's Little Folks. Most of them are lined with sheep's wool, with feathers, and other materials that bind them together. Now it happens that beetles and moths and insects devour these things, and by thus destroying them loosen the nests so much that wind and rain soon scatter the rest of the materials. But for this timely help the trees would be clogged up with a mass of old nests, the leaves could not sprout, and many trees would perish.

There is in the interior of Brazil, according to Forward, an Indian tribe which has a highly ingenious telephone. Every savage knows that by placing his ear to the ground he can hear sounds a long distance away, for vibrations of sound travel through the ground. But these Indians have utilized their knowledge in a fashion worthy of the civilized paleface. Pits are dug in the floor of two neighboring huts, a mile or less apart, and filled with chips of wood, India rubber, and other sonorous or elastic materials. They are then covered with a rubber membrane, and on speaking to one pit the words can be heard at the other pit.

There are seventy-one recorded eggs of the great auk, a now extinct bird. Twenty-nine of these are in museums and forty-two belong to private owners. The largest that has ever been placed on sale was sold last summer in London for an amount of money which in our currency would be nearly fifteen hundred dollars. It was four and three fourths inches long and very rough, being heavily blotched on top. A peculiar circular yellow mark around the top attracted attention, but it is not known whether this mark is natural. The first bid was five hundred dollars, and many bidders were anxious for it. It was secured by the Edinburgh Castle Museum, Regent's Park.

The mechanism of the leg and foot of a chicken or other bird that roosts on a limb is a marvel of design. It often seems strange that a bird will sit on a roost and sleep all night without falling off, but the explanation is perfectly simple. The tendon of the leg of a bird that roosts is so arranged that when the leg is bent at the knee the claws are bound to contract, and thus hold with a sort of death grip the limb round which they are placed. Put a chicken's feet on your wrist, and then make the bird sit down, and you will have a practical illustration on your skin that you will remember for some time. By this singular arrangement, seen only in such birds as roosts, they will rest comfortably and never think of holding on, for it is impossible for them to let go till they stand up.—The Presbyterian.

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**"My Place."**

For several days past I had been discontented. This morning I was especially uneasy, telling over to myself my grievances. I could not go to missionary meeting, nor to prayer-meeting, nor did I hardly find an opportunity to run into a neighbor's. For five years, now, I had been 'tied' at home with baby's care for, to say nothing of my Fred's old, decrepit mother to wait upon and read to.

My life is one continual round of homely duties, grumbled I, and the frettings of my heart hid just then even the brightness of duties well done.

It is hard, hard! said I. I wish I could get out into the world—into the church—where my place surely is, fretted I until the cloudiness of my face was but a reflection of the shadow of my heart.

As I glanced from the window I saw the postman coming up the walk, and in a moment I held in my hand a package from a dear invalid friend who had recently gone home.

Here has been a singularly beamed-in life, even denied the blessed comfort of a father's and mother's love and care since a young child. Helpless, she was dependent upon strangers (in a sense), being cared for in turn by different members of the church, yet she was one of the blithest little bodies I had ever met. She had been a constant inspiration to me; and because I was her dearest friend, her meager belongings had fallen to me.

I undid the package eagerly. On the top were papers. I opened the first I touched. How the familiar handwriting stirred my heart! Through fast filling eyes I read these words written by my friend's dear hand.

Yesterday, in a somewhat despondent mood, I wished I could cast off this infirmity of the flesh, go out into the world and claim my place among the workers. Suddenly this thought came with almost startling distinctness: Why, you have no 'place' out in the world, this is your place just where the Lord has put you; and even if it were possible for you to leave it and seek to fill another, it would not be one of the Lord's ordering, and you could not expect his blessing to attend you. You do not wish to be in a place of your own choosing. No! no! my heart responded. If this is the place where the Lord wants me to be, it is just the place where I truly wish to be. Since I am here, it must be the place and the only place where I can do the work he has given into my hands. What is my work? I sadly questioned. I see no fruit. Loving is serving, came the renewed heart's answer. Be receptive of all good influences; filled with the Spirit; and the overflow of your soul's riches will bless all who come near.

Being dead she yet speaketh, sobbed I, and I thanked God for my lesson—and my place—and took courage.—Lizzie Butler, in American Messenger.

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