

Sabbath School Lessons.

March 17th, 1861.

THE OLD WORLD.—GENESIS vi. 1-13.

The period at which this chapter opens, was about 2448, B.C., or 1556, A.M. This date is ascertained by accepting the recognized chronology of the world as created, 4004, B. C., and calculating the ages of the respective patriarchs from Adam to Noah. The number of the inhabitants in the old world must have been considerable at this time.

1. "The sons of God" began to intermarry with the daughter's of men, v. 2. "The son's of God" were the posterity of Seth. The pious are everywhere in the Bible called the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty.—These Sethites were comparatively a pious race, numbers of their ancestors being conspicuous for their devotedness to the cause of God. By this time, however, there had been a sad deterioration among the Sethites, yet the distinctive appellation more strictly appropriate to their progenitors than to them, was still used. The "daughters of men," are so called in contra-distinction to the sons and daughters of God. They were of the Cainite instead of the Sethite stock. Were never transferred from their connection with a fallen and depraved ancestry, to a gracious connection with the Father of Spirits.

The daughters of men were "fair." This quality attracted the attention of the sons of God. This possession is often a snare to the possessor and to others, and it is often one which females covet.

The sons of God took their wives, according to their hearts desire, and as many of them as they chose, v. 2. This was very grievous in God's sight.—Deut. vii. 3-4. These mixed marriages were the immediate cause of the destruction of the old world.

2. God was grieved with the conduct of men. His spirit had been striving with them, on account of their gradual declension. The mixed marriages provoked him exceedingly, and he determined that His spirit should not always strive with man. For he was flesh, v. 3, Psal. lxxix. 39. "Yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." Commentators regard this 120 years as a term of respite, during which the ark was built and during which there was room for repentance.

4. The giants mentioned in v. 4. are, according to eminent critics, "Men of Violence;" men who beat down, oppressed, and plundered, the weak and defenceless. The term has no particular reference to stature. However, it

is not at all improbable that the men of the old world were both in stature and strength, superior to those of the present day.

5. "God saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, &c.," v. 5. This language is intensive. It indicates not only a marvellous excess, but also a universality of wickedness. "The earth was corrupt before God—all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth."—Gen. vi. 11-12. 'If you picture to yourself everything unclean in taste and feeling, in conversation and conduct; universal in extent and enormous in measure, as to what is here averred, you will then have before you minds eye, some image of what is denoted by the language here used by the sacred writer.'

The earth was filled with violence, v. 11.—It was the order of the day. No security to anything valuable or precious—to reputation, chastity, property, personal, domestic, social or civil rights; or even to life itself.

6. It repented the Lord that he made man, &c., v. 6. God is unchangeable. He is also omniscient, and hence the language employed in this verse is hard to be understood at first, in view of these attributes. The language employed is in consideration of our weakness, and when it is said that God repents, it is meant that he changes his course of action.—'Mankind had not answered the great end for which they were made; had not deported themselves as the Lord had a right to expect, and he determines that his providential care and kindness shall not be exercised toward them as formerly. He will alter his dispensations; will change his course; deal differently toward them from what he had done.

7. Man's sin brought ruin upon his comfort. The beasts, the creeping things and the fowls of the air, were destroyed along with man.

8. Noah alone at the time found grace in God's sight. He was a just man and perfect in his generation, and walked with God. It is all the more a testimony to Noah's character that he stood singular, and conspicuous in a time of super-abounding iniquity.

Learn 1. The evil of ungodly marriages.—1 Cor. vii. 39. 2 Cor. vi. 14.

2nd. God's long suffering, v. 3, Jude 14.

3d. Though God bears long with sinners, He will punish sin.

Long suffering of God to the Inhabitants of the Old World.

And does the Lord hasten to the execution of his solemn and tremendous purpose? No. The vessel itself which our patriarch was enjoined to make, could not be built in a day.—Not only was it to be a vast structure, but of so many compartments, and contrivances, and