

*And in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off*, v. 11. The door and the olive branch have become the emblem of hope. The former United Presbyterian Church of Scotland had this as the seal of their Church, and, along with the burning bush, this picture has figured much in ecclesiastical symbols. When people are out in their ark floating on a lonely sea in trouble, doubt, sorrow, it is well to remember that God will some day bring the olive branch of new hope. Why art thou then cast down, O my soul? Hope in God, who will yet open to you a door of deliverance.

*Go forth of the ark*, v. 16. The life of inactivity in the ark was unnatural, and God calls us to go forth into the ordinary duties that await us. Suspension from the usual round of work is only for a time, that we may be the better prepared for further duties.

*Noah builded an altar unto the Lord*, v. 20. The first act in the renewed world is an act of worship. God must be recognized as the source of strength for the new task of life.

#### POINTS AND PARAGRAPHS

The Lord takes tender care of His own people. (Isa. 49: 16.) v. 1.

A little messenger, the dove; but a great mission. v. 8.

It is a severe discipline to be cut off from active service, as was Noah during his year in the ark; but God has His own way of shaping our lives. vs. 13, 14.

The altar first, even before house or barn. v. 20.

Our God is very pitiful. "He knoweth our frame." (Ps. 103: 14.) v. 21.

Very true is He also to His promises; that we may have a calm and steadfast mind for our ordinary tasks and for His service. v. 22.

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 Islands.—Peloubet.

Peter adds to our information concerning Noah by telling us that he was "a preacher

If the old sinful days before the flood are to be replaced with the peaceful work of holiness, the altar must remain standing.

"Then will I to God's altar go,  
To God my chiefest joy."

We have here a lesson in the correct worship of God. There is the altar of the Church, where we worship Him along with the great congregation, and the family altar, where the home is made the place of worship; but the most important of all is the altar of the heart, on which each offers the sacrifice of a loving and righteous service to God. "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." (Rom. 12: 1.)

*And the Lord smelled a sweet savour*, v. 21. God hears and sees. He hears prayer. The incense of pure sacrifice rises acceptably unto Him. His ear is not heavy nor His eye dull. To use human language, God's senses are acute. He is quick to perceive our needs, and swift, too, to supply all our wants. (Phil. 4: 19.)

of righteousness." (2 Pet. 2: 5.) How difficult it must have been to maintain his religion in the midst of the evil world! and what a weary 120 years of testimony with no converts!

This righteousness of Noah saved the world. Ten righteous people in Sodom would have saved that city; and all of us are saved simply for the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

How did Noah and his household occupy themselves during the whole of that long and dreary voyage? They had no chess, no cards, no old newspapers and no sensational novels. . . . Do you think that Noah would have either time or taste for them? There is no way of killing time like prayer. . . . I warrant you the withered ground under the ark was as dry as timber before Noah's eyes were dry.—Dr. Alexander Whyte.

Christ uses the flood as a lesson against worldliness. (Luke 17: 26, 27.) Men are well warned of the peril of complete absorp-