

evil from his youth. Because man inherits his depravity from his birth, God will not exterminate him by judicial punishment, but treat him with forbearance.

V. 22. *While the earth remaineth.* This promise that henceforth the course of nature

will continue uninterrupted is called "God's covenant of the day and of the night" (Jer. 33: 20, 25) and the formal establishing of the covenant and the beautiful symbol of the "bow in the cloud" are given in the following chapter.

APPLICATION

And God, v. 1. The Scripture account differs from the other accounts of the flood in that the fanciful reasons given by other nations, which ascribe the disaster to quarrels among the gods, are replaced in the Bible by the stately monotheism of Israel. All things are assigned to the one God. Not anger, but sin was the cause of the flood; and the story becomes a most eloquent plea for righteousness. God saw the corrupt state of the world (ch. 6: 12), and "it repented the Lord he had made man." Rather than continue sin, God would destroy the world. It was no slight thing for God to give up the earth to ruin, for He loved it as His own creation, had watched the beauties of His handiwork with great delight; but He is willing to sacrifice even His work to the cause of righteousness, as afterward He sacrificed His son Jesus Christ for the same purpose. What can a man love more than his child and his work? Yet, God sacrificed both for the sake of holiness, and in this way the flood became a proof of the infinite value of righteousness, than which there is nothing better in the world. "Be ye holy, for I am holy," saith God: and He tells us over and over again that without holiness no man shall see the Lord.

God remembered Noah, v. 1.

"Such grace shall one just man find in His sight

That He relents, not to blot out mankind,
And makes a covenant never to destroy
The earth again by flood."

Noah's escape was due to God's care over him, but the care was shown because of Noah's righteous character. Often when the frail boat tossed on the surface of the waters, the lonely man of God thought that he was quite forgotten, and that there would be no end to his pilgrimage. But God remembered. The faithful Christian has much cause to

thank the accuracy of God's memory, who has promised to forget nothing except our sins. "I will remember their sins no more." (Jer. 31: 14.)

And the ark rested, v. 4. Even the longest ocean voyage comes to an end, and the land heaves some day into sight. "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak: . . . though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come." (Hab. 2: 3.)

A raven, which went forth to and fro, v. 7. The raven failed to do what was expected of it. Noah thought it would fly away and bring back word about the earth, but it was so much taken up with feeding on the floating carcasses, that it remained near the ark, going to and fro. A picture of many a life to-day which is meant to visit the promised lands and bring the message of joy and hope, but instead enjoys its own selfish pleasures. How many live for their own desires, and forget the claims of service! "If any man will come after me," says our Lord, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." (Matt. 16: 24.) How many a person hurries to and fro like the raven, while men wait for the good news!

And pulled the dove into the ark, v. 9. This kind action of Noah may suggest a lesson on the treatment of the animal creation. The fierceness of beasts is said to be the consequence of man's cruelty, and in uninhabited places the animals are often quite tame. In the Yukon, for example, one tells that there is a noteworthy tameness and absence of fear among birds and the smaller animals. "It deserves notice, that at an extremely ancient period, when man first entered any country, the animals living there would have felt no instinctive or inherited fear of him, and would consequently have been tamed far more easily than at present."