

only God, to whom all worship is due. The whole host of heaven : the several elements : kings next and heroes, through flattery, or fear : beasts, birds, and reptiles : plants even and vegetables : all the criminal passions : with every vile, weak, and wicked propensity of the degenerate human mind. These, and a thousand other ridiculous Deities of metal, stone and tree, had their altars and victims, offered up with absurd and unmeaning, if not with cruel, obscene, and execrable rites. Such was the general state of the world, when the expected Saviour made his appearance in it.

Verse 17. After the separation of Cain from his brethren, his genealogy downwards is given ; distinguishing his race from that of Seth, his younger brother ; who, for their piety, are denominated the Sons of God ; while the race of Cain, from their forgetfulness of God, and their exclusive concern about the things of this earth, one stiled the Children of Men. The intermarriages with the daughters of this wicked, and hitherto proscribed cast, corrupt so the manners of the holy progeny ; that God threatens to withdraw his spirit from the whole human race ; and shortens their life ; or rather limits the time of his forbearance with their wickedness, to a hundred and twenty years, ere he destroys them in the deluge.

Chapter 6, v. 4. Giants are mentioned, as the monstrous offspring of these unhallowed connections : Giants, not, probably so much in size, as in daring deeds : and this the sacred text seems to indicate, adding : these are the mighty men of old ; men of renown : doubtless the first, who made might pass for right.

In the history of the Deluge there are many mysterious circumstances worth noticing. For instance, the Ark itself, out of which all are left to perish, was, according to the holy Fathers, a figure of the Church of God : and the small number of just souls, who were saved in it, of the small number of the elect. We observe here, previous to the Law of Moses, the distinction existing between clean and unclean beasts. Only seven persons entered the Ark, besides Noah, its builder ; who was the representative of Jesus Christ, the spiritual carpenter, who built the Ark, that is, founded the Church, in which he abides ; and saves from destruction a remnant of our race. Seven days after completing the Ark, were allowed to elapse, before the flood was poured out upon the earth. Ch. 7, 4, 10. The mysterious week of the creation is suffered thus to pass, before the final destruction of the wicked : for that week is considered the emblem of the duration of this world ; or of the whole space of time allowed to the human race, by faith and obedience to secure their salvation. We remark also, that the flood continued increasing for forty-eight days ; during which God destroyed every living creature on the face of the earth. Hence, in the old law, and also in the new, the term of forty days has been ordained a penitential one, of fasting, prayer, and special good works, to deprecate the wrath of the Omnipotent. The Raven, as a bird of prey, that returns not to the ark, but feeds upon the dead ; represents the evil spirit,

whose prey are all who perish. The Dove betokens the spirit of peace, whose resting place is with the living in the ark, till the deluge subsides ; that is, according to Christ's promise, with the faithful in the Church to the end of the world. John 14, 16, 26. On its second message forth, it brings back to Noah the green olive bough, as the earnest of God's wrath appeased, and of earth's fruits to mankind restored. Hence in most countries since, the green olive bough has been considered as the symbol of peace. The olive, besides, is the tree of unction, and an evergreen : representing, imparted to man, the sanctifying unction of the Holy Ghost ; and that grace, which keeps us alive to God ; ever pliant, adhering to the parent tree, and fruitful, like the greenwood : not barren and brittle, like the dry. It was in this sense that he said, when carrying his cross, if they have done this in the greenwood, what will they not do in the dry ? Luke 23, 31. Signifying, if on him, who is holiness and grace itself, such sufferings could be heaped for sin ; what has not the real sinner to fear ?

Chapter 8, v. 4. The Ark rested on the seventh month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, on the Mountains of Arabia.

Here is a week of months, on the seventh day of which the Ark rested, and ceased to be tossed about on the troubled waves of the deluge. We shall find afterwards established the Levitical week of years ; & the great jubilee week of seven times seven years ; and also the week of thousands, mentioned in Scripture : all which divine institutions were not ordained without a meaning ; nor recorded, without an end : for, according to Saint Paul, whatever is written, is written for our instruction. Rom. 15, 4.

Verse 20. The first act of Noah, on landing, was to build an Altar to the Lord ; and offer up to him upon a holocausts of all the cattle and fowls that were clean. His homage and supplication secure to him and his posterity the blessing of God, and the divine assurance that there should never be another general deluge : but that all the days of the earth, seed time and harvest, day and night, should not fail : and that all the other creatures should be spared for his sake.

Chapter 9th.—The sign of this covenant between God and Man, is the rainbow in the clouds, reminding man when it threatens rain, that he need fear no flood again, like the former, to destroy all flesh and waste the earth.—Nay, in the spiritual sense, it is the showery sign of baptismal grace : and the glory that enriches Messiah's mystical Church, the Church.—Ezek. 1, 28. It is the sign of the everlasting covenant made with the prefigured Noah, who built the prefigured Ark, that Church in which all to be saved, are saved ; and that too by water, the purifying water of baptism ; the sacrament, or element on which his Ark is built, and the flood on which it floats secure.

Verse 21.—We see the shameful effects of drunkenness displayed, though accidental & involuntary ; and also the powerful efficacy of a parent's merited blessing and curse. Shem and Japheth are blessed

by their father Noah, for their reverence toward him in his disguised state ; and Ham, their younger brother, cursed for his disrespect, and doomed, with his posterity to be the servant of his brethren. We see this curse exactly verified in the deplorable condition of the African negroes, condemned still to be the slaves of their brethren. For, after the dispersion of the human race, Africa became possessed by Ham and his posterity ; as appears even from several passages in the holy scripture ; Pslm. 77, 51—ibid. 104, 23, 27.—105, 22. Besides, the most ancient of the African deities was Cham or Ham ; stiled by his latest votaries, Jupiter Hummon. He was worshipped by the natives as the founder of their race, under the figure of a Ram ; which, at first, was but his sign, or accompanying hieroglyph ; he having been, like the other Patriarchs, a feeder of flocks, or a Shepherd.

Chapter 11.—The great event mentioned in this chapter is the building of the tower of Babel ; and the confusion of tongues. The undertaking, as was observed, originated in presumption and distrust in God's solemn promise that he would no more deluge the earth. God, therefore, confounded the builders, by dividing their tongues, so that, not understanding one another, they were obliged to desist from their enterprise, and separate in groups speaking different languages. In all this is recognized a striking figure of the spiritual Babel ; or the confusion of tongues among those, who, distrusting the solemn promise of Christ, that the gates of hell should never prevail against his Church ; that the floods and storms should never overthrow his house, which he, the wise man, even wisdom itself, had founded on the rock ; Mat. 16, 18. Ibid. 7, 25, presume to build on sand a more perfect, safe and durable one of their own. But the moment they set about their foolish enterprise, their tongues are confounded. The one understands not the language of the other ; and they are all divided in different groups, each named after its particular leader ; for, till they made this vain attempt, all the earth was of one tongue.

Chapter 12.—Besides the call of Abraham, and God's promise, that in him all the kindreds of the earth should be blessed ; we read here how God protected Sarai, the emblem, according to St. Paul, of the Christian Church : Gal. 4, 24. whom he permits not to become defiled : that Church, whom, in the words of the same Apostle, he has so loved, as to deliver himself up for her, that he might sanctify her ; cleansing her by the laver of water, in the word of life ; that he might present her to himself a glorious Church ; not having spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing ; but that she might be holy and without blemish.—Eph. 5, 26. Such is the beauty of the spiritual Sarai, whom the spouse in the Canticles eulogizes thus ; Thou art all fair, O my love ! and there is no spot in thee.—Cant. 4, 7.

Chapter 13, Verse 9.—Abraham's disinterestedness appears in his allowing his nephew, Lot, the preferable choice of the country he wished to inhabit.