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This month, we present chapters three and four of THE BIBLE FOR EVERYMAN by Rosalie Maas.

Enjoy!

CHAPTER THREE

NOAH

NOAH is a delightfully fantastic fairy-tale figure to most people— a venerable patriarch with a large zoo on his treble-decker houseboat. Most people are familiar from their childhood days with the story of Noah in some form, but they do not take it seriously as something which could apply to us to-day. Yet upon investigation the story proves to be a most exact symbolic account of how to save ourselves, and everything which is worth saving, from the self-destructive processes of the material,—how to steer constantly clear of the wreckage of materialism. It gives a wonderfully wise and detailed picture of the orderly steps we can take in order to find our way out of "deep waters, where the floods overflow" us. So we cannot be too grateful for its place in the Bible, and whenever gratitude enters into our Bible studies they are much enriched.

To take the story literally involves a great strain upon credulity, and robs the story of its present and universal significance. The record may well have been based on some actual happening, but it is a well-known myth

embodied in several primitive cultures. Symbols derived from the story of Noah are used all through the Scriptures, and to the student of the Bible it is clear that when the Psalmist, for instance, says, "The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves. The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea," he is thinking primarily of a great spiritual fact and not of a physical deluge. The Bible is profoundly consistent in its symbolism.

The name "Noah" means "comfort," and when we find ourselves overwhelmed with trouble, an understanding of what Noah illustrates offers us the comfort, not of emotional sympathy, but of an intelligent, constructive method of putting things right from the highest standpoint. Jesus said, "Blessed are they that mourn [who are unhappy at being deprived of that which they still hold dear]: for they shall be comforted [blessed with a sense of substantial and abiding good]."

The Thousand-Year Periods of Bible History

The record of Noah and the flood occupies the greater part of the second thousand-year period of Bible history. That is according to the reckoning made in the seventeenth century by Archbishop Ussher, who by putting in order all the years and ages given in the Hebrew text arrived at a chronology. The Bible begins with the story of the seven days of creation, which symbolizes the way in which thought works its way up by logical stages to a realization of the perfection of God's universe. Then the theme of each day of creation is developed and expanded in the corresponding thousand-year period of Bible history—"one day is with the Lord as a

thousand years." That is what gives the Bible its basic structure, its marvellous unity, its definite progression; that is what enables us to study it intelligently and without being overwhelmed by its vastness. Each day of creation is like a bud, with all the characteristics of its species latent but undeveloped; gradually it comes to full flower through its respective thousand-year period, and through its illustration in every part of the Bible. Each period is of course rich in detail drawn from symbols of all the days of creation, but it has one great and unmistakable spiritual hue.

The following gives a bird's-eye view of the thousand-year periods of Bible history and how they illustrate their respective days of creation:—

DAY OF CREATION

1st. Light—intelligent thinking.

2nd. Firmament between the waters above and beneath—purity.

3rd. Dry land appearing and bringing forth—definiteness and identity.

4th. Sun, moon, and stars to give light on the earth—one all-embracing divine system.

5th. Birds and fishes—inspiration and multiplication.

THOUSAND-YEAR PERIOD

Creation stories.

Noah saved from the universal deluge by his ark.

The focus shifts to semi-historical figures (Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses) and to the journey of the children of Israel through the wilderness to the Promised Land.

History of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel and of their captivity and return. Learning by painful experience that disobedience to fundamental Principle brings punishment; also learning through the basic teaching of the prophets how to understand that Principle.

Jesus' mission ("I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly"), and the beginnings of Christianity, with abundant healing.

Bible history ends after five thousand-year periods, although its prophetic range extends far beyond them to embrace all periods. We ourselves are now nearing the end of the sixth thousand-year period since the beginning of Bible history, and our scientific age corresponds to the sixth day of creation (in which man was given dominion). That reckoning, however, is only from one limited point of view, because when Jesus came he showed that the days of creation are so much more than the basis of Bible history;

he lived the truth of each one of them, thereby proving that they represent ever-present values, eternally available and practical to those who understand them with the head and with the heart, and who live by their standard.

The first thousand-year period of Bible history consists of the creation period, and is represented by the true and false accounts of creation, which we have already briefly considered. The light of the first day of creation not only illumines the truth of creation, but also exposes the baseless error of a false conception of creation. Now the second day, in which the firmament is introduced, is given dramatic illustration in the story of Noah. The symbol of the firmament means so much more to us immediately it is shown as it appears in operation, saving Noah from the flood. That firmament, erected between the waters above and beneath, symbolizes firm separation from all which is not Godlike and which is therefore fundamentally unreal; through erecting just such a firmament by means of his ark, Noah was able to find refuge from the destructiveness of the flood.

The Sons of God Wed the Daughters of Men and Beget Giants

The sixth chapter of Genesis opens by saying that "the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose." That is a clear symbol of choosing to divide our affections between two opposites.

The "son of God" in each one of us is all that is faithful to enduring good. To be more explicit: the son of God in us has a sense of the light of the first day of creation, and therefore is wise—he appeals to the source of all

wisdom and lets this direct his steps; he has a sense of the second day with its firmament—he can discern between the eternally real and mere temporary belief, and stand by the first; he has a sense of the dry land of the third day—he has a definite understanding of the reality he discerns, and feels that understanding growing up within himself to become his own, and inevitably bringing forth fruit; he has a sense of the sun, moon, and stars of the fourth day—he knows something of that which holds every definite detail within its system, and which operates with power when understood; he has a sense of the fifth day with its birds and fishes—he has a real love of spiritual things, which constantly lifts up his thought afresh to them, so that he feels here and now the abundant blessedness of being; he has a sense of the man of the sixth day, made in God's image, and so he is in command of every situation, because he can exercise dominion over the animal element in the world he beholds; and he has a sense of the fulfillment and rest of the seventh day—he feels that he is wedded indissolubly to the perfection of all things.

When we think that the "daughters of men" are fair, we feel the attraction of things below the standard of the son of God in us, and we choose to wed ourselves to them,—to make them our intimate companions in thought, to trust them and support them. If we do not gain a strong and pure sense of the sole reliability and reality of spiritual things, we are mesmerized by what seems superficially desirable, or the easiest course to adopt, but which is a fool's paradise, a reed "shaken with the wind,"— a merely material sense of health, wealth, and happiness. If we look for happiness in earthly things, we are looking for it in things which are perishable and liable to any accident. That is why Jesus said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth,

where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." Happiness is a spiritual possession, and one to which everyone is entitled. If we have an enduring idea of what happiness is,—the blessing of our true status as the beloved son of God, as the developing expression of impartial and universal good,— then we can never be even bruised by the inevitable disappointments of earthly hopes, and our tenure of happiness will be a lasting and ever-expanding one. Leaning on the material for happiness is a poor shift which we try repeatedly until we learn our foolishness by being brought up sharp by its ruthless treachery.

The story goes on to say that giants were born to the sons of God whenever they had intercourse with the daughters of men. So the mistake of our apparently harmless marriage is magnified until it issues in a Goliath,—an evil of abnormal proportions, which appears beyond our control. For instance, humanity has largely wedded itself to physical science, and the outcome is the H-bomb.

"And God [the highest concept of good, which exposes its opposite] saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually ... the earth was filled with violence ... all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth." We begin to be appalled at the chaos, rottenness, perversion, or cruelty which has developed.

Peter's denial of Jesus when the latter was arrested and brought before the high priest is a good instance of how the son of God in us defiles himself by being attracted by a "daughter of men" to such an extent that he temporarily allies his thought to hers. Like us, who so often fail to stand by the highest we know when it seems engulfed by overwhelmingly adverse tides of general mortal opinion. Peter did not have the courage to let himself be associated in people's minds with Jesus,—with him who constantly proved that he was the son of God. When questioned on two occasions by a woman, Peter thought it so desirable under the circumstances to be of the same opinion as the herd that he denied any such association. He was warming himself by the fire,—the fire of conventionality and false security. When he was again challenged, he cursed, and swore that he had nothing to do with Jesus; Peter had protested before that he would never forsake Jesus, but in the moment of trial he just as impetuously denied him. He would not "come out from among them," and be "separate." Jesus had said, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword"—to all mortal beliefs. Peter wept bitterly when he realized his monstrous infidelity, but he was able to redeem his mistake later. That is what this story of Noah proceeds to show us how to do.

The Building of the Ark

In spite of the corruption and violence which were widespread, "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. . . . Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God." Where there is Noah in our thought, there is always a way out from the inevitable havoc caused by

materialistic thinking. Noah acquaints himself with God, instead of with the "daughters of men."

Noah is now told to make an ark to save himself and his family from "the end of all flesh." Whenever we are disillusioned by the fickleness of the things of the flesh,—any belief of life or substance in matter,—it is a significant stage in our development, for there is born in us a great desire for substantial and unshakable good, for that which will not perish or let us down. And so we turn unreservedly to the spiritual, where alone can we find such a thing. If we are wise, we begin at that point to build up our understanding of spiritual facts,—the right conception of everything we seek, whether it be health or happiness or supply. That is our ark.

The directions which Noah is given for making the ark are quite explicit. The Bible is always definite when it comes to describing spiritual structures — think of the exact account of the city foursquare in Revelation, for instance. When we want to find refuge in fundamental truth, it is no good setting about it vaguely, and yet the general tendency of religion has been to think that one can find in an emotional belief in God lasting spiritual strength in the face of gathering floods. That which is based merely on emotion can be swept away if the tides of disaster are fierce enough. But the strength which is based on an intelligent understanding of the spiritual, and which has stood the test of experience's challenge, because in every detail of life its standard has not been forsaken—that strength is impregnable. Jesus said, "whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain

descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock."

So our construction of a place of refuge has to be intelligent and orderly. Noah is first told, "rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch." The rooms in a building make provision for specific requirements; our spiritual thinking is not to be vaguely vast, then, but is to take account of all our individual needs. Also, "pitch" is to make it proof against all possible infiltrations of fear or doubt or discouragement; that is to say, we must stoutly uphold in our lives (the without) the truth we proclaim (within).

Noah is next given measurements for the length, breadth, and height of the ark. The length symbolizes the line of orderly spiritual reasoning which we have to follow. One essential fact must lead to another in logical sequence, as in the days of creation, and this disproves the false logic of reasoning from material premises. The Psalmist says, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord." The breadth symbolizes that width of outlook which is the outcome of looking beyond personal limitations in order to become an individual channel for fundamental good; again, the Psalmist says, "Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip." The height symbolizes the inspiration which must uplift our thinking to receive the full consciousness of perfection: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in."

Then the ark is to be given a window and a door. The window in our ark is to let in the light of divine intelligence, and to allow us to look out and see

everything in the light of that intelligence, instead of "judging after the flesh." The door is to enable us to shut ourselves safely in while the storm is on, and to come out when the storm is over; Isaiah says, "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast."

The ark is also to have three storeys; that is, our understanding of spiritual truth in any situation rises in three stages. First of all, it causes us to see that "the flesh profiteth nothing." Then we take refuge in our understanding of spiritual truth, while the error of belief in the flesh destroys itself; "a thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee." And finally we rise to the height of seeing that "I am the Lord; and there is none else;" at that point the error has no place and no memorial. This essential threefold process is very clear in the story of Noah, and appears in several forms.

All Flesh To Be Destroyed

When the instructions for building the ark have been given, Noah is told: "behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die. But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee." This may seem a harsh judgment on all flesh and also favouritism to Noah, but it symbolizes the wonderful fact that the material and evil element in our present experience has to go, but the good does not have to be swept away with it. The end of every error is inevitable, however inextricably we seem to be involved in it, but if we have the

spiritual strength to separate ourselves from the things of the flesh, then all that is good (all that reflects the divine nature, as outlined in the days of creation) remains alive with us.

Jesus illustrated this in the healing of the maniac of Gadara, as recorded in Mark 5. This man had an unclean spirit and behaved like a wild beast; "but when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him, and cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit. . . . Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding. And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand ;) and were choked in the sea." The "devils" which try to enter into each one of us may be rejected by our advancing sense of good, but they also ask to be allowed a definite home in the swinish element of human nature. Jesus, however, saw that they must be allowed no medium whatsoever, and the result was that the swine themselves "ran violently down a steep place into the sea," and were choked. The man was then seen "sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind." All that is impure and evil in any situation is doomed to destruction,—not just to be relegated to a corner as highly undesirable but inevitable in the order of things. Its nature is nothingness and it must return to nothingness. But the inherent good remains.

By Sevens and By Twos

Noah is told to take in with him male and female of every kind of creature, in order to "keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth." Into our ark we have to take our individual sense of everything and maintain its essential nature. We have to take "clean beasts" by sevens (the measure of perfection) and "unclean beasts" by twos. The "unclean beasts" in our experience are our selfish desires and ambitions, our hates and enmities and jealousies, our lingering diseases, our unsolved problems, our undesirable traits of character—all these have to be brought into our ark in order to be purified. If we try to leave these temporary evils out of our spiritual reckonings,—out of our ark,—we are not thorough-going and not even honest. But it is no good trying to force conditions to achieve the ideal in a moment; if we understood as much as Jesus, and manifested his love, unhealthy conditions would naturally surrender to the ideal immediately we came across them. But while our understanding is still immature, we can only strengthen that understanding systematically as best we can, and then let it bring forth fruit in its own due order, and as our worthiness increases.

Jesus made the same point in his parable of the wheat and the tares in Matthew 13. He told of a man who "sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way." When the tares appeared, the man's servants asked if they should go and gather them up. But they were told, "Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn." With our enthusiastic but

meagre understanding of spiritual ideas, we sometimes make violent and wilful attacks on some evil and expect its immediate collapse without more ado. Experience soon teaches us the vanity of this, and wisdom substitutes the uncompromising patience which waits for the "harvest" of mature and fully realized understanding. This waiting is not giving in to evil, nor does it ever countenance evil as really substantial, but through its pure and steadfast sense of the reality it takes one progressive step (however small) at a time and consolidates its position constantly until the goal is slowly but surely reached.

Noah Enters the Ark and the Flood Begins

"Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth." Whenever we too have dominion over every element in our consciousness, we can face the flood with the authority of the sixth day of creation.

"And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him,"—our "family" consists of all the right ideas we associate with ourselves,—"into the ark, because of the waters of the flood. . . . And it came to pass after seven days,"—after the assimilation of what we know of the perfection of spiritual things,—"that the waters of the flood were upon the earth . . . the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened." The truth of the second day of creation seemed to be disproved at this point, because the firmament had been erected for the specific purpose of restraining the waters above the heaven and under the heaven, and yet now they were flooding the earth. Chaos had taken the place of order. That often seems to be the case

in our experience, and we can either let self-pity submerge us, or else we can be like Noah and get into the ark to disprove for ourselves that the divine order ever can be repudiated. Malachi says, "prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." We can always regard a flood of trouble as a blessing, rather than as a catastrophe, if we look upon it as an opportunity to prove the supremacy of spiritual fact in the teeth of fierce opposition.

"And the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth." The challenge of the flood keeps our thought up, from a determination not to be overwhelmed by the sense of defeat and failure. That is true of any time of crisis in human affairs, but mere human will may crack under this strain, whereas divine ideas can stand endless opposition because they are by their very nature unopposable. In Revelation 12 the great red dragon "cast out of his mouth water as a flood" in order to swallow up the woman who had brought forth the man child; but the earth swallowed up the flood, and the woman was given "two wings of a great eagle," in order to fly into the wilderness, where she had "a place prepared of God," and where she was "nourished . . . from the face of the serpent." So the flood serves only to give wings to our understanding, and causes us to experience the tender provision of infinite good for our well-being.

"And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights." What we understand of spiritual perfection very often brings the opposing evidence of physical sense down upon us in torrents of abuse. This evidence screams that a certain evil is an inescapable material fact before our eyes;

that it paints itself forcibly in our own consciousness, so that we feel its unpleasantness; that our animal instincts accept it and expand it; and that it has foundations, which give it continuity and perpetuity. For instance, someone may appear hateful; you agree as to their hatefulness; you indulge in hating them; and you do not see how you can stop hating them. The children of Israel had to face a similar fourfold barrage of materialism when they were in the wilderness for forty years, and Jesus faced and overcame it when he was in the wilderness for forty days and forty nights. Noah, too, proved the substancelessness of this flood of assertion: we read that all flesh was destroyed and that "Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark."

The Ark Rests

"And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged"—the power of God forced the waters to abate. The wind set all opposition at nought. Isaiah says, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him;" that standard irresistibly arrests the development of every flood.

"And the ark rested in the seventh month . . . upon the mountains of Ararat." "Ararat" means "holy land." There we have an echo of the seventh day of creation, the day of divine rest in the "beauty of holiness." The ark could rest because it had fulfilled its purpose, and so it brought a sense of heaven on earth.

The Raven and the Dove

"And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made: and he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth." Noah wanted to know whether the flood had really gone down; and we can never leave our ark until we do know that the floods of trouble have ceased to leave any trace whatsoever.

Sometimes, like Noah, we make the initial mistake of sending out a raven,—an unclean, predatory bird, and an object of superstition,—but he brings no reliable information and never returns. His opinion as to how things are going is swayed only by the changing face of circumstances. The raven state of thought is haphazard, not founded upon the certainty of rocklike fact, and therefore may be full of cheerfulness at one moment and full of depression the next. It may muddle through, but no credit is due to it if things come right in the end.

At other times we have the wisdom to send forth a dove, a symbol of that state of thought which acquaints itself intelligently with God, and is then at peace, waiting for the fulfillment of the divine purpose. The first time we send her forth, she finds "no rest for the sole of her foot,"— she cannot find any tangible evidence of the divine fact in some condition, but she still retains her hope and faith. So Noah pulls her back into the ark (he lets his peace return to him) and waits "yet other seven days;" just so, when we first meet with no response, we resolve to add quietly to our understanding of the spiritual. Next time she is sent forth, the dove comes back in the evening (when thought is at rest) with an olive leaf in her beak, showing

that the flood has subsided a great deal; this time some improvement is definitely manifest. This is not the moment to relax our efforts, however, with the hope that everything will go on improving of its own accord, and so we wait yet another period of "seven days," while we seek the spiritual with renewed sincerity, and then we send the dove forth the third time. She does not return to us now, because she can find a place for the sole of her foot—human consciousness and fundamental spiritual fact have coincided.

We can see in very small compass the same three stages in Jesus' healings—for instance, in the story of the healing of the blind man, recorded in Mark 8: "And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking. After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly." The man's blindness corresponds to the dove finding no place for the sole of her foot. His partial restoration of sight, so that he can see "men as trees, walking," corresponds to the return of the dove with the olive branch—a greatly improved state, but still not perfectly healed. Finally, the man sees "every man clearly"—the dove does not have to return. This is the only recorded occasion on which Jesus was not at once wholly successful, and it is encouraging to us, because it shows in slow motion, as it were, the method which Jesus used and which is available to each one of us. These sendings forth of the dove require great patience and perseverance, but there is no achievement without unremitting effort and unselfed love.

All the symbols in this story of Noah are marvelously exact. The fact that they are picturesque puts them at a discount in our rather prosaic age, but in this very quality lies their memorableness and their universality.

Noah Removes the Covering of the Ark

At last the flood is over: "the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry." At this point spiritual strength can lay down its weapons and enjoy the peace of victory. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds."

Then Noah builds an altar and sacrifices to the Lord, who "smelled a sweet savour." That is a primitive way of indicating that gratitude for deliverance brings an atmosphere of blessing into our lives.

The Bow in the Cloud

God next blesses Noah and his sons, and tells them: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." A covenant is then established with Noah, and the symbol of it is a bow which is to appear in the cloud; this is to betoken that God will not again bring a flood of waters upon the earth. The rainbow is made up of seven distinct colours, and "seven" was always used as a symbol of perfection by the Hebrew writers. So there is always a bow in the cloud if we look to the seven days of creation, those "seven pillars of wisdom," upon which all reality is founded. If we are only alert enough to keep our gaze steadfastly on that bow whenever a cloud of trouble appears on our horizon, then we can forestall the trouble, and we need never be overwhelmed by it—it will prove abortive. As Paul says,

"God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape."

If a cloud creeps up on us, it is only because we have failed to see the bow in that cloud. The bow is always there for those who have eyes to see it. Again and again this story of Noah brings out the necessity for watchful discernment, immediately separating from all that is not purely good and abiding in the ark until the flood dies down.

Ham, Shem, and Japheth

Noah did not always see the bow in the cloud, because we next hear of his relapse: he got drunk and was "uncovered within his tent." The little story that follows brings out very plainly the characters of Noah's three sons,—Ham, Shem, and Japheth,—and those three sons again represent three stages of thought in Noah's experience. We have already seen this three-tiered symbol in the story of Adam, appearing as Cain, Abel, and Seth. We might call it the "bad-better-best" strain which runs throughout the Scriptures in various forms.

Ham, which means "heat" or "black," saw "the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without." This unpleasant state of thought prides itself on "not glossing over the facts," though all it is ever doing is subscribing to mortal belief as fact. The Ham state of mind in us can only see the bestial in others and then loves to talk about it.

But then Noah's other two sons, Shem and Japheth, came along and adopted a very different method. They "took a garment, and laid it upon

both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness." They were looking "not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen," and they were reflecting in some measure the profoundly important fact that God is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and [cannot] look on iniquity." Shem and Japheth represent that which is able to see beyond the temporary evil to the underlying good in every individual. On the human plane the qualities of compassion, affection, and tolerance achieve this, but within limits; even the kindest heart or the sternest sense of duty can be faced with conditions which seem beyond the power of redemption by human love. But love of the caliber of Jesus' is rooted not merely in nobility of sentiment, but in an unshakable understanding of that universal Principle of good which reflects itself and proves that the real man can be used only as a channel for good and can never be induced to act as a medium for evil.

Jesus may be said to have "gone backward" with a "garment" on his "shoulders" when he was confronted by the woman taken in adultery, just as Shem and Japheth were confronted by Noah's backsliding infidelity to his ideals. Jesus "stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them [her Ham-like accusers] not." He forced them to withdraw from their condemnation, because he himself saw, not barefaced impurity, but womanhood clothed with purity, and he saw it so fully that he was able to say, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more," knowing that she would justify his scientific compassion.

The Story of Babel

The story of Babel in Chapter 11 also forms part of the second thousand-year period. "And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech." The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines "language" as "A vocabulary and way of using it;" is not that what the Bible offers us—the ability to learn the meaning of spiritual ideas and how to use them? What more could we ask? Yet what we next read of is the grandiose attempt to make a city and tower on earth to ape the grandeur and order of spiritual ideas in their infinite relationships. No organization for world peace can hope to be successful if merely founded upon community of material interests, instead of upon the common God-given rights of man.

The first fatal mistake made by the builders in this story of Babel is the use of brick (made from clay, and so symbolizing Adamic beliefs, which can never be erected into a unified structure), instead of stone (symbolizing substantial spiritual facts). The second mistake is the use of slime instead of mortar; no abiding harmony comes about if there is any taint of hypocrisy, but only through the unselfed love which sees that every man has his place and function in the divine order. The result of these two fatal mistakes is confusion (the meaning of "Babel"), misunderstanding, and division.

The obvious contrast is afforded by the picture in Acts of the apostles all working together in mutual understanding and love, without any self-aggrandizement, because although they had "diversities of gifts," they recognized that it was "the same Spirit" which had implanted these gifts individually.

Today we can see that no organization for world peace can hope to be successful if it is founded merely on human egotism, but if it is based on a humble recognition of the common God-given rights of man and of each nation's unique contribution to the whole.

A Summary

This second thousand-year period is so profound in its detail that it is impossible here to do more than just indicate its richness. But what are the outstanding points of this story of Noah and the ark, and how do they apply to us?

1. Every time we have enough spiritual strength and purity not to find the "daughters of men" fair, we see the basic unreality of some evil element in our experience; as soon as we see that, we separate ourselves from its inevitable self-destruction by constructing an ark of understanding.
2. By entering that ark we prove the supremacy and substance of spiritual fact in spite of the flood,—the worst forces that evil can muster against us.
3. This experience brings it home to us that there is always an orderly way out, which unfolds greater and greater spiritual good.

At first it may seem too difficult even to make an ark; it is not easy, but the alternative is victimization by the flood. As we make it a habit to enter our ark, it becomes progressively easier and more natural to us, and nothing brings greater blessing.

fulfillment at every level, as Abraham found in this incident. God is Love, not a being who strictly rations His kindness!

A Summary

After the account of the temptation to sacrifice Isaac, the story of Abraham merges into the story of Isaac. So if we now think of the story of Abraham as a whole, what is the main impression it leaves with us? That when we resolve to leave the mortal sense of ourselves in order to realize more of our true selfhood, then that resolve inevitably bears tangible fruit—in other words, the "dry land" of definite purpose begins to appear in our thought and then to bring forth. Even though we may become disheartened and make mistakes, that purpose cannot be frustrated if we are sincerely striving to follow the leadings of the divine demand, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee."