

**'THE STORY OF NOAH'S ARK',
IN A COURSE OF EIGHT
SERMONS FOR LENT AND
EASTER. MATUTINAL MINUTES**

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'The Story of Noah's ark', in a Course of Eight Sermons for Lent and Easter. Matutinal Minutes
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NOTICE.



The Sermons contained in this little volume are published at the request of some of those who heard them, with the design of devoting any profits arising from their sale towards building a church in which they and the Author are interested.

"THE STORY OF NOAH'S ARK,"
IN A COURSE OF
EIGHT SERMONS

FOR

LENT AND EASTER,

PREACHED IN S. HELEN'S CHURCH,

TARPORLEY,

BY THE

REV. AUGUSTUS F. TOLLEMACHE, M.A.,

ASSISTANT CURATE.



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FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.

“THE BUILDING OF THE ARK.”
“THE REPROACH OF THE CROSS.”

“*Make thee an ark of.....wood.*” Genesis vi. 14.

We are to think on the Sunday mornings during this Lent on the story of Noah's ark. We will by the help of God learn some lessons from that story profitable for this season. Let us then think of the building of the ark to-day, that we may be able to build such a haven of refuge for ourselves. “*Make thee an ark of wood.*”

What was the meaning of that command to Noah? It was a call to escape from the destruction coming upon the earth. God had “looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them, and behold I will destroy them with the earth.” Yes! God, we are told earlier in the chapter, “repented that He had

made man upon the earth." Man had so marred the work of God's creation which had once been pronounced "very good." Man had made it all so to "groan and travail in pain," that God could bear the sad sight, could listen to the mournful sound no longer. Man would show no sorrow for what he had done, so God must be sorry for him.—God must wash out the stain of man's sin which was dyeing the earth deeper every year.—God, I say, must wash that darkening blot by the tears of His own repentance. "Behold I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth." It was on this account, my friends, that Noah was bidden "Make thee an ark of wood." It was to be a harbour of safety from the storm, provided for that "one man" and his family whose "works were found righteous before God."

"Make thee an ark of wood." It was a strange command to the world around, this order to begin ship-building in the midst of a green field. Many of God's commands are strange, "very strange" in the opinion of the world. The eye of faith alone can see their meaning, and so it was a command which did not stagger Noah. But we can imagine the trials he had to endure, the taunts cast at him by the world around. It has always been so, as we shall see more clearly soon. "The offence of the Cross" hath never ceased. They came, no doubt, and looked on as Noah began to work at the ark with his children. Perhaps they

tried to hinder them as they dragged the heavy timber along; or they sneered at him, "What art thou doing, old man? Why art thou laying such a grievous burden on thy family?" Noah made no reply, but to work harder at his building, knowing that their taunts were only bringing their destruction nearer. "He held his peace," save only to pray for them, and, "preacher of righteousness" as he was in word as well as deed, to warn them of their danger. They, fools as they were, "counted his life madness and his end to be without honour." He knew he was "numbered with the children of God," and his "lot was with His saints."

"Make thee an ark of wood." Why of wood? Because, "blessed is the wood whereby righteousness cometh." Though it might seem to the world around "a piece of wood of small value," yet "divine wisdom directed its course." God had given the very material the power of supporting itself and those it carried in safety over the troubled surface of the waters. But this is not the only reason why it was so suitable. There is in the counsels of God a marvellous action and reaction as between sin and its punishment, so between sin and the cure. Shakespere has written, and there is a fund of practical wisdom in the words, "The best of men are fashioned out of faults." Why then was the ark of safety to be made of wood? Because it was under a tree that man first sinned, so was it with the leaves of a tree that he first clothed himself; aye,

under the foliage of the trees of the garden that he hid himself, when a guilty conscience told him that he was no longer like God, and so could not "see Him as He is." And so it was here too, now that the first act of disobedience had gone on bearing its deadly fruit—the command went forth to the "one righteous man," "Make thee an ark of wood."

Noah, no doubt, with that keen spiritual insight which God had given him, saw the significance of the material of which he was building his Ark as regards the past. Perhaps he saw a deeper significance still which it had as regards the then future. That future is now the past to us, and yet in another sense it is present with us. For as you well know, the meaning of the seasons of the Christian year is, that they may bring the facts which they commemorate as living realities,—acted dramas at any rate—before our minds. And surely the words of the text do this very well, as regards that season which we entered upon once more last Wednesday.

"Make thee an Ark of wood." The call to keep Lent is a call like that of God to Noah, to escape from the wrath threatened upon a world lying in wickedness, and ever ready to fall upon it. It is a call to prayer for ourselves, to intercession for others. It is a call to take up the cross and bear its reproach, and lay it upon us—upon our sins first, then upon our lawful pleasures, that we may become more and more conformed to the image of the Crucified. He is our true Noah who "shall comfort us concerning