

Monergism

**THE NEW TESTAMENT ARK OPENED
AGAINST THE DELUGE OF DIVINE WRATH**

EBENEZER ERSKINE

Monergism

**THE NEW TESTAMENT ARK OPENED
AGAINST THE DELUGE OF DIVINE WRATH**

EBENEZER ERSKINE

THE NEW TESTAMENT ARK OPENED AGAINST THE DELUGE OF DIVINE WRATH

by Ebenezer Erskine

Table of Contents

[THE FIRST SERMON ON THIS TEXT - HEB. 11:7](#)

[THE SECOND SERMON ON THIS TEXT - HEB. 11:7](#)

[THE THIRD SERMON ON THIS TEXT - HEB. 11:7](#)

[THE FOURTH SERMON ON THIS TEXT - HEB. 11:7](#)

[THE FIFTH SERMON ON THIS TEXT - HEB 11:7](#)

[THE SIXTH SERMON ON THIS TEXT - HEB 11:7](#)

**THE NEW TESTAMENT ARK OPENED
AGAINST THE DELUGE OF DIVINE
WRATH**

HEB. 11:7.—By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.

THE FIRST SERMON ON THIS TEXT

IN the preceding chapter, the apostle, in the close of it, had exhorted the believing Hebrews to persevere in the faith; and to enforce the exhortation, he demonstrates, in this chapter, the excellency of the grace of faith, and that, first, Abstractly in itself considered, ver. 1–3; secondly, By laying before them the example of their believing ancestors, both before and after the flood.

This verse which I have read contains the example of the faith of Noah, who was the last patriarch of the old world, and the first of the new world; I mean the last before, and the first after, the flood. More particularly in the words you have these things.

1st, An alarm sounded, (warning is given by God of things not seen as yet.) The party that gives the warning is God. And when God speaks or warns, well doth it become all the inhabitants of the earth to listen, Psal. 50:1, "The mighty God the Lord hath spoken, and called the earth, from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof." When the lion roars, the beasts of the field tremble. The subject matter of the warning is about things not seen as yet; that is, the approach of the general deluge, or destruction of the whole world by water, of which there was not the least visible appearance when the warning was given of God. Sirs, the word of God deals mostly about things that are not seen, things invisible and eternal, which as yet lie behind the curtain; hence faith, that believes the word of God, is called, ver. 1 of this chapter, "the evidence of things not seen;" a setting to the seal to what God says, though not obvious unto sense.

2dly, In the words we have the person, and the only person, that took the alarm in all the old world, viz. Noah, whose character we have,

Gen. 6:9, "a just man, and perfect in his generation." He was a just man, being justified by faith, in the promised seed of the woman; and he was a holy man, whose walk and conversation justified his faith, in the view of the ungodly inhabitants of the old world. And being such a person as lived near God, God takes him upon his secrets, and imparts that unto him, which was hid from all the world besides. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and unto them will he shew his covenant." Yea, sometimes he not only imparts to them the secrets of his covenant, and the mysteries of his kingdom; but also the secrets of his providence, what he is about to do in the world: so did he unto Noah; and so did he unto Abraham, when he was about to destroy Sodom: "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I do?" The Lord will do nothing, but he will reveal it unto his servants the prophets. It is dangerous to pry curiously into the secrets of God's purpose or providence, but when he is pleased to reveal them, they are welcome.

3dly, We have the way how the warning was taken by Noah. It was by faith; that is, he believed the word of God, that the flood would come: and the ground of his believing was the faithfulness and power of God; his faithfulness, "for it is impossible for God to lie;" and his power, that was able to give being to his word of threatening, as well as his word of promise.

4thly, We have the affection of Noah's soul, that was stirred or exercised by this awful warning of the approaching deluge; he was moved with fear. When faith sees a smiling and reconciled God in Christ, it moves the soul with joy and gladness, yea, a "joy unspeakable, and full of glory." But when faith sees a frowning or a threatening God. then it begets fear, not a slavish, but a filial fear; like a dutiful child, that falls a-trembling when he sees the rod in his Father's hand, and anger in his countenance. Such was the fear of Noah; and God declares, that he has a particular regard unto the soul that thus fears him, Is. 66:2, "To this man will I look, who is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and who trembleth at my word."

5thly, We have the wise improvement that Noah made of God's warning concerning the deluge: why, his faith and fear excited him to prepare an ark: "The wise man (saith Solomon) foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself." True faith of God's operation is a sagacious grace; it takes up things not as yet seen, dangers that are out of the view of the rest of a blind world, and provides for safety against approaching dangers. So here, Noah's faith engages him to prepare an ark against the deluge. Noah had not the ark to build when the deluge came; no, it was ready for use, when the windows of heaven, and the fountains of the great deep, were opened; and the fruit and effect of his faith and fear, and diligence in preparing of the ark, was the saving of himself and his house.

Now, I do not stand so much upon the literal, as the mystical and spiritual intendment of all this. The history and mystery of the Old Testament is opened and unveiled in the New Testament. It is granted by all, that the deluge of water, whereby God destroyed the old world, was a typical representation of the wrath of God that is revealed from heaven against all the wickedness and ungodliness of the children of men, which will infallibly sweep away the wicked, and all the nations that forget God, into hell: and that Noah's ark was a type of Christ, and of that salvation that believers have in him, from the wrath of God, and the curse of the broken law; for "whosoever believeth in him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life," The apostle Peter gives us an hint, and that not an obscure one, of what I am saying, concerning this typical design of the deluge and ark, 1 Pet. 3:19–21, "By which also he went and preached to the spirits in prison: which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls, were saved by water. The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Where, by the spirits in prison, we are to understand the souls of the inhabitants of the old world, who, in the days of Peter, were imprisoned in hell, but in the days of Noah, they were alive in their

bodies. Noah, by the direction of the spirit of Christ, went and preached to them, and warned them of the approaching deluge; but they never regarded him, but went on in their sinning trade, until the water came, and carried them away, except eight souls that were saved in the ark. Now, there is the type, and then follows the anti-type, ver. 21, "The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us," &c.

The main doctrine that I have in view from the words, is as follows.

DOCT.—"That Christ is the great New Testament Ark into which sinners must enter, if they would be saved from the deluge of divine wrath."

The method, through divine assistance, shall be as follows.

I. I would speak a little of the wrath of God, with allusion unto the universal deluge.

II. Of the warnings God has given, and is still giving, of the deluge of his wrath.

III. I would speak of Christ as the only ark wherein safety is to be found.

IV. Speak of the access that sinners have to this New Testament Ark.

V. How it is that a sinner enters into this ark, so as to be saved from the deluge.

VI. Deduce some inferences, and make some application of the whole.

I. The first thing is, to speak a little of the wrath of God, with allusion unto the universal deluge in the days of Noah.

1st, then, The sin and wickedness of the old world was the procuring cause of the deluge, Gen. 6:5–7, "And God 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, And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the creeping things, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them."

Now, I say, as the sin of man procured a deluge of water, so doth it procure the deluge of the wrath of God, that is or has been revealed against all the wickedness and ungodliness of the children of men. Before sin entered into the world, God and man lived in perfect amity and friendship; Man was the darling of heaven, God's viceroy; and he gave him a sovereignty over all the works of his hands, Gen. 1:18. But no sooner had man sinned, but a dismal cloud of wrath began to hover over man's head, which had dissolved in a shower of snares, fire, and brimstone, to the destruction of all mankind, had it not been for the interposition of a second Adam, the eternal Son of God, who undertook to take away the sin of the world. For his sake, and upon the account of his satisfaction unto justice, a stop is put to the execution of divine vengeance. But that same flood of wrath will run with the greatest violence against all unbelievers, who reject him, and his great salvation, Heb. 2:3 and 10:28, &c.

2dly, God did not take the inhabitants of the old world in a surprise; but gave them warning before the flood came and destroyed them: he dealt with them by the ministry of Noah for the space of one hundred and twenty years, Gen. 5:32 compare with 6:11, in order to reclaim them, but all in vain,

Just so, God is long-suffering, and slow to wrath, towards the children of men. He doth not speedily execute judgment, like man, in a fury and rage; no, but he waits to be gracious; he warns of the wrath to come, and beseeches and entreats them to turn from their

evil ways: Forty years was his spirit grieved with that generation of Israel in the wilderness, until at length he swore in his wrath that they should never enter into his rest; but many a time he turned away his wrath, Psal. 68:3–8, before it came to that.

3dly, When the appointed time for the execution of the threatening against the old world came, God made the heavens and the earth to combine for their destruction; for both the fountains of the great depth from below were broken up, and the windows of heaven above were opened upon them, Gen. 7:11.

Just so, God, who is the Lord of hosts, and doth whatsoever he wills in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, Dan. 4:35, can and will arm the whole creation against impenitent sinners: he can command the earth to open its mouth, and swallow up its inhabitants, as it did Koran, Dathan, and Abiram, Numb. 16:31, 32; and he can call for hosts of angels, and celestial luminaries, to avenge his quarrel upon rebellious sinners, as he did in the case of Sennacherib, 2 Kings 19:35, and the inhabitants of Canaan, Exod. 33:2.

4thly, The waters of the flood were irresistible. All the inhabitants of the old world, with their united force, though many of them were giants, men of huge stature and strength, Gen. 6:4, yet they were not capable to stop the current of the flood.

Sirs, the wrath of God, when it breaks out upon Christ-despisers, cannot be stopped by all the power of angels or men: "Who hath hardened himself against God, and hath prospered?" Job 9:4. "Who would set the briers and thorns in battle against him, he would go through them, he would consume them together, Is. 27:4. "The stout-hearted are spoiled, the men of might cannot find their hands," when God contendeth, &c., Psal. 76:5.

5thly, The waters of the deluge overflowed all the refuges that the inhabitants of the old world fled to for shelter. We may easily

imagine, that they would fly to the highest rocks and mountains to save themselves from the waters; but the waters swelled and rose, until it covered all the high hills and mountains on the face of the earth, under the whole heaven, Gen. 7:18–20, there was no shelter left them.

Just so is it in the case before us. Sinners, when they hear of the wrath and vengeance of God pursuing them on the account of sin, they fly to the hills and mountains of their own making. Some fly to the mountain of general mercy: but God sweeps away that; for "he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour," Is. 27:11. Some fly to the refuge of an outward profession of religion, and think to find shelter there; but the water of God's wrath pursues them there, as it did the foolish virgins with their empty lamps, Matth. 25:6. Others they fly to the mountain of the works of the law; but the deluge pursues them there, "for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified," Gal. 2:16. Thus God makes "the hail to sweep away the refuge of lies," Is. 28:17.

6thly, The flood was universal; it spared none but those that were in the ark. In like manner, the flood of God's wrath will destroy all that are out of Christ; "for there is none other name given under heaven among men, whereby we must be saved, but the name of Jesus," Acts 4:12.

II. The second thing was, to speak of the warnings that God gives of the deluge of everlasting wrath that is to come upon all Godless and Christless sinners; for as God warned the old world of the deluge of water, 1 Pet. 3:20, so doth he warn the inhabitants of this world, particularly of the visible church, of the wrath to come.

I shall not stay upon this, having lately had an occasion, from Job 9:4, to present before you a great many beacons of divine wrath, that he has set up in the scriptures of truth, to warn sinners, that they split not on the same rocks on which others dashed their souls into a hell of eternal wrath and misery. No man can read his Bible, or hear

the gospel preached, but he must hear of a wrath to come from God upon impenitent sinners: "Except ye repent (says Christ), ye shall all likewise perish," Luke 13:3. God "shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such a one as goeth on still in his trespasses," Psal. 68:21. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God," Psal. 9:17. And, of all sorts of sinners, the wrath of God will burn hottest against gospel and Christ despisers: "It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgement, than for such," Matth. 10:15. A notable word to this purpose you have, Heb. 10:28, "If they that despised Moses' law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace."

THE SECOND SERMON ON THIS TEXT

HEB. 2:7.—By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark, to the saving of his house.

HAVING spoken to the two first heads of the method, I now go on to

III. The third thing proposed, which was, to speak a little of Christ, as the great New Testament Ark, that God has provided for saving sinners from the deluge of his wrath.

1st, The ark was a mean of God's preparing for the salvation of Noah and his family. It is true, Noah built the ark; but it was entirely at God's order and direction. It would never have entered into Noah's head or heart to build the ark, if God had not given him the plan of it.

Just so, Christ is a Saviour of God's providing and appointment. The plan of man's redemption by Christ was laid in the heart of God; it is the wisdom of God in a mystery. Men and angels would have been at an eternal stand, if it had been put to them, how man should be saved from the wrath of God, and the curse of the law, in a consistency with the justice, holiness, truth, and faithfulness of God. The whole creation cried, Your help is not in us. Well, but God devises a way; the Son of God shall be incarnate, and be substitute in the room of sinners; and by his obedience to death, justice shall be satisfied, and the honour of the law repaired, and "whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life," John 3:16; Psal. 118:23, "This is the LORD'S DOING, it is wondrous in our eyes." We find God glorying in it as the chief of his ways, Psal. 89:19, 20, "I have laid help upon one that is mighty, I have found David my servant," &c.

2dly, The ark was very large and capacious, as is clear from the account that we have of it, Gen. 6:14–19. And it was necessary it should be so, considering that it was the common receptacle, not only of Noah and his family, but of all sorts of beasts, birds, and living creatures, that were upon earth, and necessary provision for their subsistence, for the space of about a whole year.

But, Sirs, the New Testament Ark is far more large and capacious than Noah's ark; for he is none other than the infinite and incomprehensible God, in the person of the eternal Son, who made all things, John 1:3, compare with Heb. 1:3, and upholds them by the word of his power. As there was room and provision in the ark for all the living creatures of every kind that entered into the ark; so there is room in Christ for all that will come, be they Jew or Gentile, Barbarian, Scythian, bond or free, male or female, it is all one. Ye are welcome to enter into the New Testament Ark, John 3:16, and 10:9.

3dly, All that entered into the ark were saved, but all that did not enter in perished, Gen. 7:21–23. Just so is it here, Mark 16:16, "he

that believeth in Christ shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned."

4thly, Noah's ark was a piece of grand folly to the wits of the world: no doubt they would flout him and mock him as a fool, while he was preparing the ark, to the saving of his house. Just so Christ, and the way of salvation through his death, "is to the Greeks foolishness, and to the Jews a stumbling block," 1 Cor. 1:23.

5thly, Hence it came that few, only eight souls, entered into the ark, and were saved, Gen. 7:18. Just so is it here, Christ "is despised and rejected of men," Is. 53:3, and therefore few come unto him, Matth. 22:14, "Many are called but few are chosen," chap. 7:14, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

6thly, Although there were but few saved in the ark, yet it was a great evidence of God's love and kindness to man, that any of them were spared, when they all deserved to die, Gen. 6:5, 2, 12. Just so here, although there are but few that are saved, yet his providing a Saviour, and saving a remnant of mankind by Christ, is a wonderful instance of his love and kindness to mankind, 1 John 4:9, "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." See John 3:16, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

7thly, The ark, after it had been tossed upon the waters for about seven months, at length rested upon the mountains of Ararat, Gen. 8:4, so Christ, our New Testament Ark, after he had been tossed in this world, and torn in his name, person, miracles, and ministry, he rested from his work and warfare, in his resurrection and ascension; after he had suffered, he entered into his glory, Luke 24:26, having finished the work the Father gave him to do, he rested in heaven, and

is repossessed of that glory he had with the Father before the world was," John 17:4, 5.

8thly, They that were saved in the ark (viz. Noah and his children) became heirs of a new world, Gen. 9:10, &c. So all that are saved by faith in Christ become heirs of God, and of glory, and are "begotten into the lively hope, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, 1 Pet. 1:3, 4.

9thly, Noah and his family, after they were saved by the ark, got a promise, That the water should never more destroy the earth, Gen. 9:9–11.; and, in token thereof, the bow was set in the clouds, ver. 12–17.

So all that fly to Christ are secured by God's covenant and promise from the wrath and curse of God, Rom. 8:1, "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus," See Is. 54:10–12, "For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed. O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones." We read, Rev. 4:3, of a rainbow about the throne of Christ, which alludes unto the transaction with Noah anent the flood.

10thly, All sorts of creatures, clean and unclean, were admitted into the ark, without distinction, Gen. 7:8, 9. The ark was open to them all.

Just so is it now, under the New Testament, since the coming of Christ in the flesh, the gospel of the grace of God is preached promiscuously unto Jews and Gentiles, without any distinction. It is true, before the death of Christ, and during his personal ministry on earth, the poor Gentiles were excluded, and the disciples, when sent to preach the gospel, it was only to the cities of the Jews, but they

were discharged to go into the way of the Gentiles, or to enter into any of the cities of the Samaritans, Matth. 10:5, But after his death and resurrection, their commission is enlarged, and the door is cast open unto all nations, Mark 16:15, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." It is true, the apostles, even after the resurrection of Christ, and the down-pouring of his Spirit in his extraordinary gifts, could not receive this commission of preaching the gospel to every creature; they continued preaching it to the Jews only, Acts 10:19, until they were cured of their mistake, by Peter's vision of beasts, clean and unclean, Acts 10:11–16, and the Holy Ghost his falling down upon the Gentiles, as well as upon the Jews, ver. 44; and thereupon they began, according to their commission, to preach the gospel to all without any distinction; and when the Jews refused the gospel, the apostles turned themselves unto the Gentiles, Acts 13:43–49. So that I say, as Noah admitted of beasts clean and unclean into the ark, in order to their being saved from the deluge; so our great New Testament Ark is opened to sinners of all sorts and sizes; if they be descended of the first Adam, they are all welcome to a second Adam, Prov. 8:4, "Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men." But this leads me to

IV. The fourth thing in the method, which was to speak a little of the door of access unto the New Testament Ark.

Noah's ark stood open until all the creatures that could not subsist in the waters had entered in, and until the deluge broke out, Gen. 7:7–9; for, if it had been shut, no creature could have entered into it, or been saved.

Just so, if there were not a way or door of access unto Christ, no flesh could be saved. But we bring you good tidings of great joy, Luke 2:10. Christ is a common Ark, a common Saviour, to sinners of mankind: And to encourage poor perishing sinners to come to him, I will tell you of several doors by which entrance by faith is to be had into the New Testament Ark, that you may not perish in the deluge.

1st, The door of the revelation of Christ, as a Saviour come into the world. What is the design of the whole scriptures of truth, from the beginning to the ending, but to make Christ known to the sons of men, in order to their believing in him, that they may be saved from the wrath to come, John 20 last, "These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life through his name." John 5:39, "Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." Sirs, Christ is evidently set forth before you in the world, read and preached, his whole righteousness and salvation is set before you, and brought near to you; and, pray, for what end? but that you may improve him to all the ends of his saving offices. They that want the bible and a preached gospel, will have far more to say for themselves than you, unto whom the word of God and the gospel of salvation is sent, John 15:22, compared with Matth. 10:15; Rom. 10:14, for "how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" For this is not the case with you: for Christ is nigh to you, in your mouths and hearts, even in this word of faith which we preach, Rom. 10:8. So that the very revelation of Christ is a door of faith, especially when we declare to you, from Christ's own mouth, "that he came not into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved," John 3:17.

2dly, The incarnation of the Son of God, or his assuming our nature into a personal union with his divine nature, is a blessed door of faith for any poor perishing sinner of Adam's family. This we find is set forth for a ground of faith through the whole scriptures of truth: It was the first thing proposed to Adam and Eve immediately after the fall, when they were under awful apprehensions of present death, Gen. 3:14, 15. (viz. the seed of the woman) shall bruise thy head, (viz. of the serpent). They were to believe that the Son of God, who was speaking to them, would, in the fulness of time, become the seed of the woman, or be incarnate, and avenge their quarrel; and the faith of this eased and quieted their spirits, because in this they saw that God was upon their side. So in the promise made to Abraham, the

incarnation of the Son of God presented unto him and his posterity, Gen. 22:18, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Upon which the apostle, Gal. 3:16, gives the following commentary, "He doth not speak of seeds as of many, but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ." In the rest of the scriptures, where these two promises are more fully opened, we find the incarnation of the Son of God was presented as a ground of faith and hope to the church of God. David, in the Psalms, frequently speaks of him as man, Psal. 8:4, compared with Heb. 2:6, the Son of man, and the Man of God's right hand, Psal. 80:17. Isaiah speaks of him as a Child born unto us, although at the same his name is THE MIGHTY GOD, chap. 9:6, and 53 as a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. Jeremiah, as a Branch of righteousness, chap. 33:15, that was to spring out of the root of Jesse, Is. 11:1. And every where almost in the New Testament, he is presented as the Word made flesh, John 1:14; made of a woman, Gal. 4:4; the Seed of the woman, Gen. 3:16; born of a virgin, Matth. 1:16; Who "took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham," Heb. 2:16. And commonly, when he speaks of himself through the evangelists, he denominates himself by the human nature, rather than by the divine, the Son of man. One special reason of which is, as I think, because the faith of sinners could not terminate or fix upon his divine nature, but by virtue of his human nature. The hand of faith lays hold upon the skirt of the human nature, that it may thereby draw, as it were, the divine nature alongst with it, knowing that the personal union between these two natures cannot be dissolved. Now, that there is here a general ground of faith laid for all mankind that hears tell of this great mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh, appears, if we consider, that it was not the person, but the nature of man that Christ assumed. And the nature of man is equally related to every man and woman that possesses a true body and a reasonable soul. Insomuch that every one that hears of him is warranted to say, this is my brother, "bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh," Gen. 2:23, as Adam said of Eve when presented unto him, and therefore a help meet for me, ver. 20. O Sirs, consider this, and dwell upon it. Christ, by virtue of his incarnation, is our Goel or Kinsman, he is our blood relation, and he

took part of your flesh, that so he might be capable to act a part for you, which none else of the human race was capable to do, even to redeem you by his blood, and by death to bruise the head of the serpent. And is not this a noble ground of faith, trust, and confidence in him? O Sirs! enter in and take possession of the New Testament Ark, by this door of his incarnation, and claim him as yours, by an appropriating faith, saying with the church, Is. 9:6, to us (or to me) is this child born, &c. This doctrine was delivered by the angels at the birth of Christ, as good tidings of great joy unto all people, Luke 2:10, 11, where they say to the shepherds, (not to us, but) "To you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

3dly, Another passage by which faith may enter into the New Testament Ark, is Christ's obedience to the law, which was violatē, broken, and dishonoured, by the sin of the first Adam, and of all his posterity. For understanding of this you would know, that the condition upon which life was promised to Adam, and to all mankind in him, was perfect obedience unto the command of the law, "He that doth these things shall live in them," Lev. 18:5, compared with Gal. 3:12. And if Adam had continued in his obedience, he and his posterity might have claimed temporal, spiritual, and eternal life, as a debt due to them (though not upon the account of the intrinsic merit of his obedience, yet) by virtue of the paction in the covenant of works. Well, man being in honour, continued not, Psal. 49:12, compared with Gen. 3:6. He brake the covenant by eating the forbidden fruit; and all his children's teeth ever since have been set on edge against God, their carnal minds being enmity against God, are not subject to the law of God, Rom. 8:7, by which means they have lost their title to that life promised in the first covenant, and are fallen under the sentence of death; and without the honour of the law, be repaired by a perfect obedience yielded unto it by man, or one in man's nature, it stands as an eternal bar in the way of life and salvation unto all mankind. Well, Christ, the eternal Son of God, as man's Kinsman and Surety, undertakes to repair the broken law, saying to his Father, "Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is

within my heart," Psal. 40:7, 8, compared with Heb. 10:7, as if he had said, 'Let my ear be bored unto thy service in this matter, for it is the firm purpose of my heart to fulfil all righteousness that the law requires of mankind sinners.' And accordingly, in the fulness of time, he is not only made of a woman, but made under the law, Gal. 4:4, and in our stead and room magnifies the law and makes it honourable, Is. 42:21; by which means, 'all legal bars and impediments lying in the way of salvation and life, from the part of the command of the law is made up again, and the law as fully satisfied as though it had never been broken, and the title to the life promised in the covenant of works comes to stand in the person of our common Kinsman and blood-relation;' upon which account, his righteousness and salvation is published and brought near unto all; yea even unto them that are stout hearted and far from righteousness, Is. 46, at the close. And you see in the fortieth psalm, after he had said to his Father, in the council of peace, "I delight to do thy will, O my God, yea, thy law is within my heart," immediately he adds, ver. 9, 10, "I have preached righteousness in the great congregation, I have not refrained my lips, O, Lord, thou knowest, I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart," &c. Thus you see, that all who have the gospel preached unto them have a right of access to his righteousness or perfect obedience, to the law; and whoever they be that believe in him as the Lord, our righteousness, Jer. 23:6, they enter into the New Testament Ark, and are saved from the deluge of God's wrath; "For there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," because the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in them, Rom. 8:1, 3, 4, and 10:4, Christ becomes the end of the law for righteousness to them. Hence is that of the apostle, 2 Cor. 5 at the close, "God was in Christ, not imputing their trespasses to them; for he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

THE THIRD SERMON ON THIS TEXT

HEB. 11:7,—By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.

AFTER resuming of what is above, I go on to tell you,

4thly, The death of Christ, or his atoning blood, is another door by which poor sinners do enter into the New Testament Ark, and are saved from the deluge of divine wrath. We are said to come by faith unto the blood of sprinkling, Heb. 12:24, "and to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus," chap. 10:19. Christ as crucified is evidently set forth, Gal. 3:1, before all, in the dispensation of the gospel; hence the apostle Paul tells the Corinthians, "That he determined not to know any thing among them, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified," 1 Cor. 2:2. Christ says, speaking of his death, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me," John 12:32. And accordingly, when the apostles went through the nations preaching the gospel, what was the great thing they continually harped [insisted or dwelt] upon? "We (says he) preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness, but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God," 1 Cor. 1:23, 24.

For clearing this matter of the death of Christ as a ground of faith, you would know that there is a threefold sufficiency in the death of Christ.

1. An intrinsic sufficiency arising from the infinite dignity of his person who suffered, being the infinite God in the person of the Son, clothed with a veil of flesh; and in this respect, there was such a value in his death and blood, that it was sufficient, not only to redeem all mankind, but ten thousand worlds, supposing their existence and fall too, if it had been so ordained. But,

2. There is an ordinate sufficiency, whereby the death and satisfaction of Christ is limited unto the elect, and in this respect Christ declares that he laid down his life for the sheep, John 10:15.

3. There is a legal sufficiency, by which the law and its penalty is fully answered; insomuch that neither law nor justice is any obstruction or bar in the way of a sinner's salvation, that believes in him; but on the contrary, that moment a sinner believes in him, 'all the charges that the law and justice had against the poor sinner, they are all cancelled,' Gal. 3:10; Col. 2:14; Rom 8:1, 33, 34.

Now, when we speak of the death of Christ as a ground of faith, we abstract entirely from the ordinate sufficiency of it for the elect; for that being among the secret things that belong unto the Lord, Deut. 29:29, it can never be a ground of faith unto any man, no, not unto the elect themselves, that Christ died for the elect, otherwise a man behoved to know his election, before he adventured to believe, which is a thing absolutely impossible, in regard our election of God is a thing that can only be known by obeying the call of the gospel; hence we are commanded, 2 Pet. 1:10, to give all diligence to make our calling and (then) our election sure. And therefore seeing it is not the ordinate sufficiency of the death of Christ that we are commanded to preach, which would lead us in among the secret decrees of God, which do not belong unto us, it must needs be the intrinsic and legal sufficiency of the death of Christ, that is to be held forth, as the ground and foundation of faith to sinners of mankind. Hence are these universal and extensive expressions in scripture, John 1:29, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." 1 John 2:2, "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world." 1 Tim. 4:10, "He is the Saviour of all men, especially of those who believe." All mankind have such an interest in the death and satisfaction of Christ, as the devils have not. Yea, considering that it was the human nature, that was the sacrifice, and that all mankind are related to him, through his taking hold of the human nature (as was said), it is impossible to conceive how all mankind, especially gospel-hearers, should not have

an interest in his death, I mean, such as warrants them to say, in faith, "He loved me, and gave himself for me," Gal. 2:20. "He was delivered for our offences," Rom. 4:25. "He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities," &c., Is. 53:5. And upon this account I conceive that the death of Christ, and the benefits flowing therefrom, is said to be a feast made unto all people, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined, Is. 25:6. This is the carcase unto which all the hungry eagles of mankind should gather, and feed to the full, Matth. 24:28. Hence it is, Luke 14:21, 23, "The poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind, that lie about the hedges and highways, are called, yea compelled, to come in," and feast with him.

5thly, The great and precious promises of the covenant of grace, especially the absolute promises (which have no manner of condition annexed to them), are another door by which faith enters into the New Testament Ark, and saves the soul from the deluge of divine wrath. A promise of Christ was the first door opened to Adam and Eve, immediately after the fall, Gen. 3:15, It (viz. the seed of the woman) shall bruise thy head (viz. the serpent's) after the same manner the door of faith was opened to Abraham, Gen. 22:18, "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." And (in that promised seed) "I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee," chap. 17:7. All the other promises are so many streams and little rivulets of grace that flow out of the womb of these two promises; such as that, Is. 44:3, "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground," Jer. 24:7, "I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord, Ezek. 36:25-27, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: and from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you; a new heart also will I give you," &c., "And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes," Hos. 14:4, "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely." Now, it is by virtue of these great and precious promises of the new covenant, that we receive and apply Christ, and his righteousness and fulness, as our excellent

confession of faith well expresses it; and therefore I call this promise of God a door by which we enter into the New Testament Ark.

For further clearing of this matter, you would know and consider these few following particulars.

1. Ever since the fall of man, and the discovery of his purpose of grace, God has dealt with him in the way of a free and gratuitous promise, as has been just now cleared.

2. The truth and faithfulness of God is engaged in his promise, first, to Christ immediately as the covenant Head, and dispensed and given out to us in him, by him, and through him. God had never made a promise to any of the race of Adam, if he had not undertaken to fulfil the broken law, and satisfy justice for the sin of man; and upon that condition, God becomes a promising God to Christ, and to us on his account: hence all the promises of God are said to be in him. Christ has fulfilled the condition of all the promises, and hence they come out to us freely, without money and without price, Is. 55:1.

3. The very end of a promise is, that it may be believed and rested upon as a security to those to whom it is made and granted: if it be believed, and rested upon, we receive the benefit of it, but if it be not believed, it is rejected, and the promiser is not bound, but is loosed from any obligation by his promise. If you or I grant a bond or a bill to another for the payment of a sum of money, in case he to whom the bill or bond is granted, will not have the money, in that case the granter of the bond or bill is free, and is under no more obligation; Just so in the case in hand, God grants us the benefit of his promise, and registers it in the scriptures for the greater security, and is bound by his faithfulness to fulfil his promise, to every one who accepts of his bill, and sues for payment at a throne of grace, employing Christ as his Advocate for a forthcoming. But the man that refuses God's promise, rejects it as an insufficient security, or neglects to seek payment, or do not state Christ as his Advocate, he loses the benefit of the promise, and affronts a God of truth, as if his

promise were not worth a button; and is it any wonder that God makes such an one to know his breach of promise? And yet his faithfulness is not made of none effect, God will be true, and every man a liar, Rom. 3:4.

4. To cut off all handle from unbelief, the promises of God carry a general indorsement or direction to all the race of Adam, and especially to all the visible church, Luke 2:9, "I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people." Wisdom's promising voice is to men, and to the sons of men: "To you is the word of this salvation sent." The apostle Peter, Acts 2:38, when he is preaching to a company of men who had imbrued their hands in the blood of Christ, he calls them to repent, "repent every one of you, and be baptized, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins;" and to lead them to repentance, he discovers to them the mercy of God in Christ, by presenting to them the promise of pardon in the blood of the Messiah, which they had shed, saying, ver. 39, "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." And, what Peter said to his hearers, that I say unto every one of you, "The promise is unto you, and to your children." And as the apostle Paul tells the Hebrews, chap. 4:1, The promise is left to you as God's charter for the good land of glory, as God's promise was given to Israel as a security or charter for the land of Canaan; so God's promise is our charter for eternal life, and "therefore let us fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of us should seem to come short of it." But as that generation of men that came out of Egypt could not enter in, because of their unbelief; just so, there are many, many, that shall never enter into the land of glory above, because of their unbelief; they have a good right, but they lose the benefit of their right by unbelief, as Israel did, who believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation, Psal. 78:22; so that you see the promise is a door for entering into the Ark. O, do not shut the door of faith upon yourselves, lest God should shut it also, and swear in his wrath that ye shall not enter it, but be left to perish in the deluge, Psal. 95:7.

Object. 'I still doubt if I have a right to close with the promise; I am afraid that I be but guilty of presumption.' Answ. It can never be presumption to do what God commands you, "and this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ." And if the promise does not belong to you, and to all to whom it is revealed, as a ground of faith, it is impossible to conceive, how it is that an unbeliever makes God a liar, John 5:10, by disobeying it,' for no man is obliged to believe a promise that is not made to him.

6thly, Another door by which faith enters into the New Testament Ark, is the Father's gift of Christ unto mankind lost. 'There is such a gift of Christ in the word as warrants any man that reads it, to receive, appropriate, and apply Christ and all his purchased salvation to himself in particular, and to rejoice in him as his own property, Is. 55:4, "Behold I have given him for a Witness unto the people, a Leader and Commander unto the people," Is. 42:6, "I will give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles," chap. 49:6, "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth;" John 3:16, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life," John 6:32, "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven," Is. 9:6, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." From these, and many other places, it appears, there is such an universal gift or grant of Christ unto sinners of mankind, as makes it lawful and warrantable for every one to receive, use, and apply him, for all the ends for which he is given; for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. No man doubts of his right to take or receive a gift when it is held out to him, and he bidden take it; and we have a common proverb among us, Have or take will make a deaf man hear. It argues a very strange infatuation, among men and women, that they should so readily grasp at a gift of this world's good, and yet be backward in receiving God's unspeakable gift, that would make them up in time and through all eternity. If I had this house full of gold and silver to distribute and scatter among you, and were calling every man and

woman, young and old, to come and get as much as they want, I am sure there would be few or none in that case that would draw back, every one would be more forward than another, to receive or gather. Well, Sirs, why so forward to receive worldly riches that take wings and fly away? and yet refuse to receive Christ and his unsearchable riches which we are scattering among you in the dispensation of the word! Here is the great gift of heaven, without money or price. Here is the gift of life, "for he that hath the Son hath life," 1 John 5:12. Here is the gift of righteousness, that will entitle you to God, to heaven, and glory, and all the good of the covenant. Here is given gold tried in the fire, Rev. 3:18, that moth and rust cannot corrupt. Matth. 6:20. Here is the best robe, Luke 15:22. White raiment, Rev. 3:18, clothing that doth not wax old. Here is the merchandise of wisdom, that is better than the merchandise of silver, and her gain, which is better than fine gold, Prov. 3:1, 4.

You particularly that are young children and bairns, you are perhaps longing for to-morrow, being the first Monday, and the first day of the new-year 1750, that you may go to your friends and acquaintances to ask your new-year's gift. I would give you my advice before it come, and that is, that before ever you go to man or woman to ask any thing, go first to God, "who giveth liberally to all men, and upbraideth not." James 1:5, and ask your new-year's gift from him. Quest. What shall we ask from him? will you put words in our mouth? Answ. I will tell you what to say and ask as your new-year's gift from God. Go to God, and say, 'Lord give me grace to improve the new-year to thy glory, and my own eternal good and advantage, if thou spare me, Lord, give me thyself, to be my God and portion for ever, for thou hast said, I am the Lord thy God, Exod. 20:2, Lord, give me Christ, and let him be my Prophet, Priest, and King, Surety, Mediator, and Advocate. Lord, give me thy Spirit, for thou givest thy Spirit to them that ask him, Luke 11:19, Lord give me the new heart, and the new spirit, for thou hast promised it, Ezek. 36, Lord give me a heart to know thee, that thou art the Lord. Lord, put thy fear in my heart, that I may never depart from thee, Jer. 32:40. Lord, forgive me all my sins, and lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from

all evil, Luke 11:4, especially from the evil of sin, which is the abominable thing which thy soul hates. Lord, teach me how to answer my chief end, how to glorify thee here, so as I may enjoy thee eternally hereafter.'

Now, I say, go to God in the morning of the new-year's day, and seek these and the like things from him, as your new-year's gift. And to encourage you to be in earnest, consider, (1.) These soul gifts are far better than any thing your friends can give you. (2.) Your God is liberal, and more ready to give than you are to ask. John 16:24, "Hitherto (says Christ), ye have asked nothing in my name, ask, and ye shall receive." Your heavenly Father has a full hand and a free heart, Matth. 7:7, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." (3.) The Lord loves young children to be about his hand, Psal. 34:2, "Come, ye children, hearken unto me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord," Prov. 8:17, "I love them that love me, and these that seek me early shall find me." (4.) God's new-year's gift will make you up for all your days, yea, for all eternity; and what he gives of saving grace, he will never take it back again, "for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance," Rom. 11:29. Only be importunate with the Lord, and do not take a nay-say; say as Jacob, Gen. 32:27, "Lord, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me;" and whatever you ask of God, seek it all for Christ's sake; for, says Christ, John 14:14, "If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it;" and though you get not what you ask at first, yet be not discouraged, but go again, and again, and again unto him. If you get not your new-year's gift the first day, go again the next day, and the next day, and continue in prayer, and ye shall find the Lord; for he has said, Jer. 29:12, 13, "Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you, and ye shall seek me, and ye shall find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart," and with all your soul.

Now, before we part, I have a word to say to you that are old people, and of a riper age.

The first day or first week of the new-year, I understand uses to be very ill spent in eating and drinking, and that perhaps to excess. I would give you that caveat or warning that Christ gave to all that profess his name, Luke 21:34, "Take heed, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day (the day of death and judgment) come upon you unawares." It is a bad requital to God for his goodness these bygone years, to begin the next year with an abusing yourselves, and abusing the good creatures of God with any manner of excess; and therefore, let your moderation appear in all things, for the Lord is at hand, Philip. 4:5.

THE FOURTH SERMON ON THIS TEXT

HEB. 11:7,—By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.

WE read, Deut. 27:11, 12, and downwards, of two great mountains, viz. Mount Ebal, and Mount Gerizzim; the one was a mount of cursing, and the other of blessing. Upon these two mountains God sets a two-fold throne; upon Mount Ebal he places a throne of justice, and on the other a throne of grace. From Mount Ebal there is an eruption of woes and curses against all mankind, which, like the deluge, overspreads the face of the whole earth, "for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," Rom. 3:23, and therefore the wrath of God, like the swelling deluge, pursues them wherever they go, until they fly to the mount of blessings, Mount Gerizzim or Mount Zion, where stands the covenant of grace, the New Testament Ark, Jesus Christ, from which there comes a cry to the poor sinner, that knows not what to do to be saved from the curse of the law, and

the wrath of the Lawgiver, "Turn ye to your strong holds," Zech. 9:12, enter into the Ark; and whosoever doth so, "shall not perish, but have everlasting life," John 3:16.

I have been essaying to cast up the doors of the New Testament Ark, that poor law-condemned, justice-condemned, and conscience-condemned sinners may take the benefit of it, and be saved from the deluge. I have named and cast open six of them. (1.) The door of the revelation of Christ in the word, for he is revealed that sinners may believe in him and be saved. (2.) The door of the incarnation, whereby God becomes our Kinsman in the person of his Son, that we may take hold of the skirt of him that was a Jew, Zech. 8:23, and go with him and be saved. (3.) The door of his perfect obedience to the law, in the room of the first Adam, whereby the title to eternal life, which was lost by the disobedience of the first Adam, is again recovered; and thus he has power to give eternal life to whom he will, as we see he himself declares, John 5:21, 22. (4.) The door of his satisfaction, whereby the hand-writing of the curse that was against us, and contrary to us, is cancelled, and the bond lying in the hand of justice, which bound us over to wrath, is retired, Gal. 3:13, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." (5.) I told you, that the great and precious, especially the absolute unconditional promises of the covenant of grace (every one of them), is a door of entrance into the New Testament Ark; all which promises come indorsed to sinners that are afar off, and to them that are near, Is. 57:19; Acts 2:39, for their encouragement to take hold of them as ropes of salvation, whereby they may be drawn up out of the ruining deluge of wrath, into the ARK Christ, in whom all the promises of God are yea and amen, 2 Cor. 1:20. (6.) The last door that I named was the door of God, the Father's donation or gift of his Son as a Saviour, by price and power; by the price of his blood and the power of his Spirit. He hath given him to be a Saviour, a Witness, Leader, Commander. And for what end is a gift given and tendered, but that it may be received? These I have already spoke to.

7thly, I proceed now to open a seventh door by which faith enters into the New Testament Ark, and that is, the name of God, as it is revealed through Christ in the glorious gospel: "The name of the Lord is a strong tower, unto which the righteous runneth," Prov. 18:10, and to which the sinner may run and be saved. Psal. 9:9, "They that know thy name will put their trust in thee:" he that walketh in darkness, and hath no light, he is called to "trust in the name of the Lord, and to stay himself upon his God," Is. 50:10. From these and the like scriptures you see, that the name of a God in Christ is given as a blessed ground of faith, trust, and confidence: and no wonder, considering that God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them," 2 Cor. 5:19.

But I shall at present insist a little on that name of God which he revealed and proclaimed unto Moses, when he condescended, at his request, to make all his glory to pass before him, Exod. 34:6, 7, "And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty."

Now, let us consider this name of the Lord a little, and see whether there be not enough in it to put unbelief for ever out of countenance.

It is a most certain truth, that ignorance of God, and of what he is in Christ, is the very mother of unbelief, by which we are turned away from the living God as an enemy. Satan knows this very well; and therefore his great slight and cunning is, to fix the eye of a sinner, whose conscience is awakened, upon its sinful, miserable, and deplorable condition, and represent God unto him as a God of inexorable justice, an avenging enemy, a consuming fire, that so he may fill it with desperation, and put it in the same case with himself; and he endeavours with might and main to hide and conceal the revelation that God has made of his name through Christ, according to what the apostle says, 2 Cor. 4:4, "The God of this world hath

blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." But in spite of the devil, and all his art and cunning, to smother the name of God in Christ, let us study to display the name of the Lord, as he has himself proclaimed it in that place just now cited, and see if there be not a noble and glorious ground of faith and confidence for the sinner, however desperate and deplorable his case may appear to be in his own sense.

1. You see that his first name is a name of glory, greatness, and majesty, THE LORD, THE LORD GOD. This, I say, is a name of great and glorious majesty, and is promised or set forth in the front, to let us know what God is in himself; that he is the infinite, eternal, and unchangeable Being; that he "fills heaven and earth," Jer. 23:24; that "he hath heaven for his throne, and the earth for his footstool," Is. 66:1; that "all the inhabitants of the world are reputed before him but as nothing," Dan. 4:35, yea, "less than nothing, and vanity," Is. 40:17. God, in the first place, I say, will have us to know what he is in himself, and how we, and all creatures, "do live, and move, and have our being in him," Acts 17:28. These, and the like impressions of the glorious majesty of God, are the foundation of all true faith, and of all religious worship and adoration. The soul gets such views and discoveries of the glorious majesty of God, as strikes it with a becoming awe and reverence of him; so that the soul cries out, as Moses, Exod. 16:11, "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the Gods: who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" Oh! who "shall ascend his holy hill, or abide in his tabernacle?" And like the poor publican, under a sense of sin, and apprehensions of the infinite majesty of God, stands afar off, smites on his breast, and cries, "God be merciful to me a sinner," Luke 18:13. But now, though this name of majesty, power, and greatness, be first presented to humble, and abase the soul in its own eyes; yet see what a glorious train of amiable names do follow it, in order to revive the heart of the humble, and the spirit of the contrite one; "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful," &c. It is pleasant to observe how

every one of his relative names do answer the soul's case and necessity.

2. **MERCIFUL.** The case of the poor soul is such, that it is crying out. 'Oh! I am wretched and miserable beyond expression or conception: I am indeed a pitiful object: I am brought low by my sin in Adam, and in my own person; Psal. 69:2, "I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing." I know and believe indeed, that Jehovah, the strong and almighty God, is able to keep and deliver me: but what says that to me, since I do not know but his almighty arm may exert itself in my destruction as readily as in my salvation?' Well, to this the Lord answers, in that name, "I am the Lord God, **MERCIFUL.**" 'If thou be miserable, I am merciful as well as strong: justice is my strange work, my strange act, Is. 28:21, but I delight in mercy, Mic. 7:18, "My bowels are turned within me, and my repentings are kindled together," Hos. 11:8, until I get a vent to my mercy?' Pray, Sirs, what is mercy? but a strong bent and inclination in God to do good to and help a sinner in misery. Misery is the very proper object and subject upon which mercy doth work; and therefore, 'O miserable sinner! trust in my mercy flowing out through the blood of my eternal Son.' But a third title is his name,

3. **GRACIOUS.** May the poor guilty and convinced sinner say, 'I am one of the most miserable creatures upon earth; I am destitute of all grace, of all goodness; I have no qualifications to commend me unto a God of mercy.' Well but, says the Lord, 'I am **GRACIOUS.** I do not seek any grace, goodness, or qualifications, in the sinner, to commend him to me; but I would have the poor, blind, naked, miserable sinner, to come to get, and not to give; to come and get gold tried in the fire, white raiment, eye-salve, Rev. 3:18, milk and honey, Is. 51:1, and all grace and goodness from me, gratis, freely, "without money, and without price." Do not seek for faith, repentance, love, humility, brokenness of heart, as a price to purchase grace and favour at the hand of God; but come, destitute of all grace, "to the throne of grace, that ye may obtain mercy, and find grace," Heb. 4:16. But,

4. May the poor convinced and awakened sinner say, 'I have been a presumptuous sinner, and have gone on so long in a tract and trade of sin and rebellion against God, that I am afraid God will endure me no longer; my day of grace is over and gone.' Well but, says the Lord, "I am LONG-SUFFERING: My patience towards sinners is not soon worn out. It is true indeed I did not suffer long the indignities that were done to me by the angels that fell; for that very moment they sinned they were turned out of heaven, and laid up in everlasting chains of darkness, in which they are "reserved unto the judgment of the great day," Jude 6. But this is not my method of procedure towards sinners of Adam's family, whose nature I have assumed, when I passed by the angels that fell. I am not willing that any of them should perish, but that all should come to repentance, 2 Pet. 3:9. "I have no pleasure in their death, but rather that they turn unto me and live," Ezek. 33:11. And, therefore, "I wait that I may be gracious," Is. 30:18. I stand yet at the door and knock; and if any man, be what he will, will "hear my voice, and open the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with me," Rev. 3:20. What is long-suffering! but patience extended and stretched out beyond all expectation, and beyond all deserving. 'If I had had a mind to cut thee off, and cast thee into hell, I have not wanted occasion and opportunity; but I have hitherto borne with all thy folly and wickedness, and to this day "I stand with the outstretched arms of love and mercy, crying, Behold me, behold me," Is. 65:1, "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" Ezek. 33:2. But,

5. May the poor doubting soul say, 'There may, has been, and is, such an abounding of sin and wickedness with me, that my sin is like unto the great mountains, it is gone up into the heavens, and cries for wrath and vengeance like the sin of Sodom; and therefore I need look for nothing but indignation and wrath.' Well but, says the Lord, Let it be so that thou art abundant in wickedness, my name is ABUNDANT IN GOODNESS. As if he had said, 'Thy wickedness and sinfulness, though it be great, yet it is but the wickedness and sinfulness of a finite creature; but my goodness is the goodness of an infinite God, that can never never be exhausted; and therefore come to me, and

get all thy wants supplied, according to my riches in glory, by Christ Jesus. My goodness is such, that I am good even to the evil and unthankful: I make the sun to rise, and the rain to fall, on the evil and on the good, upon the just and unjust, Matth. 5:45. My goodness extends unto all: and therefore come, O come, open thy mouth wide and I will fill it, Psal. 81:10. Oh! taste and see how good I am, Psal. 34:8. My treasures are full, and they are open: O, therefore, whosoever will, let him take of my goodness freely. Oh! eat ye that which is good, and let thy soul delight itself in the abundance of my goodness, Is. 55:2. "I satisfy the desire of the longing soul," Psal. 107:9.

6. May the poor soul say, "I can receive no good at the hand of the Lord; for I have an evil heart of unbelief, that calls his truth and faithfulness in question. I see indeed great and precious promises in the word, but I dare not lay claim to them: I doubt and fear that I may not meddle with them; and, when I presume to meddle with them, my unbelieving heart draws back my hand, saying, "His promise fails for evermore:" and thus I lose the benefit of God's promise.' Well, says God, 'To cure thee, O man, of thy unbelief, I present my name to thee, not only as abundant in goodness, but IN TRUTH. My name is faithful and true, Rev. 19:11, "Righteousness is the girdle of my loins, and faithfulness the girdle of my reins," Is. 11:5. "It is impossible for me to lie," Tit. 1:2. "My faithfulness is established in the very heavens," Psal. 36:5. Yea, "heaven and earth shall pass away; but one jot, or one tittle, of my word shall not fall to the ground," Matth. 5:18, and therefore thou mayest, with the greatest safety, trust my word of promise. It is not a thing that I can come and go upon: it is not yea to-day, and nay to-morrow; but it is always yea and amen. 2 Cor. 1:17, 18. And therefore believe the promise; set to the seal to it; for thou canst not put a greater honour upon me, than to set to the seal that I am true, John 3:33. Therefore, "Believe and see the salvation of God," Is. 52:10.

7. O, may the poor trembling soul say, 'What if God has shut up his tender mercies in wrath, and so will be favourable no more?' Psal.

77:7, 9. Unto this it is answered, I KEEP MERCY FOR THOUSANDS, q. d. 'I have extended mercy to thousands, that is, innumerable multitudes; and yet my treasures of grace and mercy are as full as ever, and I am as ready to extend my mercy to thousands of persons, yea, thousands of generations, as ever; "Whosoever believes, in my name, shall not perish, but have everlasting life," John 3:16. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my thoughts higher than your thoughts," Is. 55:9.

8. Might the sinner say, 'My sins are so many, they have been so multiplied and highly aggravated, that I fear he will never forgive me.' Unto this the Lord answers, I PARDON INIQUITY, TRANSGRESSION, AND SIN, i.e. all manner of sin and provocation that can be thought on; and though your sins be red as scarlet and crimson, I will make them as white as snow, and as wool, Is. 1:18. There is plenteous redemption with me that I may be sought unto; and therefore fear not, only believe; for this is my prerogative, that I love to display, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins," Is. 43:25.

Thus you see what a wide door is opened in the New Testament Ark, or what a noble ground of faith is laid in that name of God proclaimed in Moses.

But now, because sinners are ready, like the spider, to suck poison out of this rich declaration of the name of God, merciful and gracious, and to turn his grace unto wantonness, saying, 'If this be the case, we will sin, that grace may abound, Rom. 6:1, we need not fear the wrath of such a merciful God:" Therefore observe what an awful word immediately follows, WHO WILL BY NO MEANS CLEAR THE GUILTY, q. d. 'The design of all this grace and mercy which I have proclaimed, is to lead sinners to repentance, through an apprehension of my mercy in Christ; but if any shall abuse my name, Merciful and Gracious, to encourage themselves in a way of sin and rebellion against my authority, let them know that I will by no means clear such persons: No, no, he "is condemned already, and my wrath

abideth on him," John 3:18, 36. And when "he turns this grace unto wantonness, he but treasures up wrath against the day of wrath, and the revelation of the righteous judgement of God," Rom. 2:5. And therefore, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, Is. 55:7, "and let him return unto the Lord," from this consideration, that "I am the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious; fury is not in me," Is. 27:4. I do not delight in the death of sinners, Ezek. 33:2, but am ready to shew mercy to thousands. But if he will harden himself in sin because I am merciful and gracious, he will do it to his cost; for "who would set the briars and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together," Is. 27:4. "But let him take hold of my strength (the man of my right hand), that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me," Is. 55:7.

THE FIFTH SERMON ON THIS TEXT

HEB. 11:7.—By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark, to the saving of his house.

I AM speaking of Christ, the New Testament Ark, into which sinners are to enter, in order to their being saved from the deluge of divine wrath and vengeance. Sirs, I would not wish to have the blood of any soul in this audience, or under my charge, upon my head: and therefore I have been essaying to shew you a way of escape, and for this end I have already essayed to open seven doors by which you may enter by faith into this New Testament Ark. I have yet a few more to open: and O that, while I am opening them, God may persuade and enable you to enter in and be saved.

1st, then, The commission Christ got from his Father, to save and redeem lost sinners of Adam's family, is a pleasant door by which entrance is to be had into the New Testament Ark. He did not take this office unto himself, but was called of God, as was Aaron, Heb. 5:4; Is. 42:6, "I, the Lord, have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will help thee." You know, when a man is regularly called or ordained unto any office, it is a sufficient warrant for any man to employ him in his office; and when he is employed, he is obliged to discharge the duties of his office unto those that employ him: Well, Sirs, this is the very case with Christ. And, to clear this, consider these particulars.

1. He was elected unto his office as a Saviour, Is. 42:1, "Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth." Hence he tells us, Prov. 8:23, That he "was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was."

2. He was anointed, fitted, and furnished, with all gifts, graces, and endowments, necessary for the discharge of his saving work. Hence he himself declares, Is. 61:6, "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek." Is. 42:5, "I have (says the Father) put my spirit upon him, he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles: and accordingly the spirit was given him without measure, John 3:34, and he received gifts for men, he ascended up on high, Psal. 68:18.

3. His Father actually sent him into the world upon the great errand of redemption, Is. 61:1, "He hath sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that were bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." A jubilee of release unto all the captives of Sin and Satan, and the day of vengeance of our God, viz.: vengeance upon the old serpent whose head he came to bruise; for, "for this purpose he was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil," 1 John, 3:3.

4. He voluntarily accepted of his Father's commission, to come upon our errand; and with alacrity and cheerfulness came, "leaping upon the mountains, and skipping upon the hills," Cant. 2:8. He set his face like a flint, Is. 50:7, against all storms that blew upon him, from heaven, earth, and hell; and never fainted nor was discouraged, until he had "finished the work which his Father gave him to do."

5. He opens his commission, and declares himself to be the Sent of God, the great Ambassador of heaven, to negotiate in the great affair of peace, pardon, and salvation to lost sinners. John 3:17, "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." John 4:34, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." John 12:44, 45, Jesus cried and said, "He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me; and he that seeth me, seeth him that sent me."

6. He not only opens his commission, but shews his Father's seal appended to his commission, John 6:27, "Him hath God the Father sealed." He was solemnly sealed at his solemn inauguration, when baptised by John in Jordan, Matth. 3 at the close, when the heavens opened, and the Spirit of God descended in the likeness of a dove, and his Father testified concerning him, with an audible voice, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Every miracle he wrought, in raising the dead, opening the eyes of the blind, opening the ears of the deaf, curing all manner of diseases by a touch of his hand, or a word of his mouth, his resurrection from the dead, and pouring out of his spirit upon his disciples in the day of Pentecost, endowing them with power from on high, &c., all these, and many other things, were solemn seals appended to his commission.

7. As he himself was sent and commissioned by his Father, so sends he his apostles and other ministers to proclaim and publish the gospel of the grace of God unto all the world. "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you," John 20:21. And what commission gives he them? Mark 16:15, "Go ye (says he) unto all the world, and

preach the gospel to every creature," Matth, 28, at the close. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Hence "we are ambassadors for Christ, we pray you in Christ's stead, as though God did beseech you by us, be ye reconciled to God," 2 Cor. 5:20. Now, I say, is there not in all this 'a clear and fair ground laid for your believing, or entering into the New Testament Ark?' O, Sirs, ponder Christ's commission from the Father; for this "is the work of God, that ye believe in him whom he hath sent," John 6:29. See that ye do not refuse him that speaketh, Heb. 12:25, from heaven, for it is his Father's solemn command, "Hear ye him," Matth. 3 last, i.e. believe in his name, for they that turn a deaf ear to him shall perish in the deluge.

2dly, Christ's declared ability and sufficiency to save is another door for faith to enter into the New Testament Ark. No man will readily enter into the ocean upon an insufficient bottom. If one that is on a voyage to a foreign country get the least notice or advice, that such a ship is insufficient, or if he have but a suspicion that it is so, he will turn away from her, and will neither venture his person nor his goods into her. This is the case with every legalist and unbeliever; he has a secret suspicion in his heart, that Christ alone is not sufficient to save him: And therefore he will rather venture his eternal life upon the general mercy of God, or upon the law and the works of the law, upon his own inherent grace, his duties and good qualifications, than upon Christ; or if he does not set Christ aside altogether, he will venture partly upon Christ, and partly upon something done by himself; 'Christ and my faith, Christ and my works and duties, Christ and my obedience, Christ and my tears, prayers, will, I hope, do my business, and save me from the deluge of God's wrath.' Now, I say, whence comes all this, but from a secret jealousy and suspicion of Christ's ability and sufficiency, and that he alone is not to be lippened unto? And hence, through an evil heart of unbelief, they turn away from him, and lay the stress of their salvation upon this

and that, and the other broken plank of their own making and devising, saying with those in Micah 6:6, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams?" In a word, until the sinner is fully and thoroughly convinced of the absolute sufficiency of the New Testament Ark, and of his full ability to save, he will never believe in him to the saving of his soul.

Now, to convince you of his ability and sufficiency, will you take the following testimonies concerning him. (1.) take the testimony of God the Father, Psal. 89:19, "I have laid help upon one that is mighty." (2.) Take Christ's own testimony, Is. 63:1, "I speak in righteousness, and am mighty to save." (3.) Take the testimony of the Holy Ghost, whose office it is to testify of him: "He (says Christ) shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you," John 16:14, that ye may believe in me. (4.) Take the testimony of all these three witnesses in heaven, together, 1 John 5:10, 11, "This is the record (viz. of the three in one, and one in three), that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." (5.) Take the testimony of the apostle Paul, speaking by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, Heb. 7:25, "Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. (6.) Take the testimony of the ransomed in glory, who tell, from their experience, that he alone undertook and accomplished their salvation, Rev. 5:9, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seven seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." Thus you see there is sufficient ground for your faith to rest upon Christ's ability to save; and to dispute our doubt of it is to call God a liar, 1 John 5:10, and to call all men liars that ever knew him.

But to illustrate this ground of faith a little further, I will tell you of a fourfold ability and sufficiency that there is in Christ.

1. An ability of merit for obtaining of pardon and acceptance through his obedience unto death. As was already shewed, there are two

things the sinner wants in order to restore him to the favour of God, and to his title to eternal life, that was forfeited by his breach of the covenant of works: (1.) Pardon of sin; and (2.) A perfect law righteousness. Now, both these are to be found in Christ. As to the first, viz. pardon, why this we have in him, for he hath finished transgression and made an end of sin, Dan. 9:24. As to its condemning power, "he is the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, John 1:29. "We have redemption in his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace," Eph. 1:7. Hence the apostle John declareth, chap. 1:7, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin;" and it is upon the ground of the satisfaction of Jesus that God declares himself to be the "Lord pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin," Deut. 34:7, and promises to be merciful to our unrighteousness, Heb. 8:12. As to the second, viz. A perfect law righteousness, this is to be had to the full in Christ, for he is "the end of the law for righteousness unto every one that believeth," Rom. 10:4, "He is made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. 5:21, "The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us," Rom. 8:4, This is that best robe that is put upon the poor prodigal when he comes home, Luke 15:22, whereby the shame of his nakedness is covered; this is the wedding garment that fits for communion with God, and entitles the soul unto that "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away," 1 Pet. 1:4. So that there is in Christ a fulness of merit for justification.

2. There is in Christ a fulness of wisdom for the soul's instruction and direction in all cases; "for in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," Col. 2:3. By this Spirit of wisdom and understanding he gives unto fools and babes the knowledge of the "deep things of God, which are hid from the wise and prudent of the world," Matth. 11:25, compared with 1 Cor. 2:10. And by his skill and wisdom he directs and guides his poor people through all the dark and difficult steps in their way, until he bring them to glory, and so accomplish that promise, "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not, I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will

make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight," Is. 42:16.

3. There is in him a fulness of strength and ability to bear up the poor soul under all work and warfare that it is called to engage with. Sometimes the poor believer, looking to the poor weak fund of grace within him, is ready to succumb and cry out, 'Alas! such and such work as the Lord carves out for me will be marred in my hand, I am not sufficient to think, to will, to do.' But here, believer, lies an all-sufficient fund of ability, "Thy God hath commanded thy strength," Psal. 68:28, "Then mayest thou be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might," Eph. 6:10. "He gives power to the faint, and he increaseth strength to them that have no might," Is. 40:29. Sometimes again the poor weak believer is ready to faint, because of the many and mighty enemies he has to grapple with; 'Alas! (will he say) I have no might to subdue this or the other strong lust and corruption; it will master me; one day or other I shall fall into the hand of the enemy; Satan supports the power of indwelling sin, so that I have not only flesh and blood, but principalities and powers, spiritual wickednesses in high places to contend with, Eph. 6:12, I know not what to do.' Well, poor believer, here lies the glory of thy strength, Psal. 89:17, even in Christ, who has already, in his own person, destroyed sin and Satan, and who has also said, that he will subdue thine iniquities, Mic. 7:19, "Sin shall not have dominion over you," Rom. 6:14. And as for Satan, "the God of peace will shortly bruise him under thy feet," Rom. 16:20, and mean time his grace shall be sufficient for thee, 1 Cor. 12:9.

4. There is in him an all-sufficient stock of grace for the supply of all thy wants; for "it hath pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell," Col. 1:19, "that out of his fulness all we might receive grace for grace," John 1:16, The grace that is in him, as Mediator, is not in him for himself, but for us poor needy sinners, 1 Cor. 1:30, "He is made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." "He received gifts for men," Psal. 68:18, that man might be "blessed in him with all spiritual blessings

in heavenly things," Eph. 1:3, and therefore men, and the sons of men, are invited to come to him and get their own, for he and all that he is, or has, as Mediator, is for us. O then, "Come, come, come and take of the water of life freely," Rev. 22:17.

3dly, There is another door of access to the New Testament Ark, that is the door of his good-will that he bears unto fallen man beyond the fallen angels (who are by nature creatures of a higher rank than man; for God made man a little lower than the Angels, Psal. 8:5.) When the angels left their first state, there was no good-will discovered towards them, yea, on the contrary, they are shut out of heaven to hell, where "they are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day," Jude 6, But when man sinned, and fell from the state wherein he was created, what strange work is made for his recovery? Hence is that declaration of the angels at the birth of Christ, "On earth PEACE, GOOD-WILL towards men," Luke 2:14. He "is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance," 2 Peter, 3:9.

Quest. Wherein doth this good-will of God towards man, fallen man, appear? Answ. In these few things:

1. Does it not appear in his remembering us in our low estate, Psal. 136:23, when we were like the infant cast out into the open field, none to pity or help, yet even then he looked upon us, and our time was the time of love, Ezek. 16:5, 9?
2. How did his good-will appear, when, immediately after the fall, the remedy was discovered, Gen. 3:15, It (viz. the seed of the woman) shall bruise thy head (viz. the serpent's)? the plaster is at hand to be applied, even before the wound was given by the serpent?
3. Was it not good-will to men upon earth, that he would not trust any angel or archangel with his salvation, but commits it unto his OWN SON, his BELOVED SON, "who is in the form of God," Philip 2:6, and is fully able for the work?

4. Was it not good-will in the Son of God not only to assume the human nature, but to take our law-place, that law and justice might reach him for our debt? For he "was made of a woman, made under the law," Gal. 4:4. He was made sin for us, 2 Cor. 5:21. "And he was numbered with the transgressors," Is. 53:12.

5. Was it not good-will in him to die for our offences, and to rise again for our justification? Rom. 4:25. Greater love than this hath no man, than that a man lay down his life for his friends: "But God commendeth his love to us, in that while we were yet enemies, Christ died for us," John 15:13, compared with Rom. 5:6–8.

6. Is it not good-will to man, in that when he had finished our redemption upon earth, that he should ascend into heaven, to appear in the presence of God for us, Heb. 9:24, as an Advocate at the high court of justice, Is. 53 last, "He was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors," Luke 23:34; 1 John 2:1, "And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

7. Is it not good-will to man upon earth, that he commands the white flag of peace to be lifted up in the view of mankind, and creates the fruit of the lips, peace, peace to him who is afar off, and to him who is near? Is. 57:19.

8. Is it not good-will to man, that he makes offer of himself, and of his whole salvation, to sinners? Is. 46:12–13, "Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted, and far from righteousness, I bring near my righteousness unto you: it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry."

9. Is it not good-will to man, that when he sees them running unto their ruin, in the broad way that leadeth to eternal destruction, he pursues them, crying, O "turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die? for, as I live, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that he should turn," Ezek. 33:11. Oh, how many a cry gives he after Israel!

Jer. 3:1, "Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return again unto me, saith the Lord," and verse 14, "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you."

10. His heart is glad, and heaven rings with joy when a prodigal returns, Luke 15:23–24, "Let us eat and be merry, for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. There is joy in heaven among the angels when a sinner is converted, chap. 15:7–10.

11. His good-will appears in his behaviour when sinners continue obstinate to refuse the offers of his grace, Psal. 81:13, "O that my people had hearkened unto me." He wept over Jerusalem, saying, Luke 19:42, "O if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!" He enters a protest before heaven and earth, and their blood did not lie at his door, but at their own, Jer. 2:12–13, "Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord: for my people have committed two evils, they have forsaken me, the Fountain of living waters, and have hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." Thus you see what good-will Christ and his Father bears towards your salvation; and is not this a door by which you may enter into the New Testament Ark, and be saved from the deluge? Oh how justly shall the sinner perish for ever, that despises this good-will, and receives all this grace in vain!

4thly, The command of God, that is laid upon every one that hears the gospel, to believe in Christ, is a blessed door of access into the New Testament Ark, John 3:23, "This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." Sirs, God has such a good-will towards our salvation, that he has concluded us under a law, and has interposed his authority, enjoining us to believe in the name of his Son; and he has fenced his law with the most awful and terrible threatening in case of disobedience; "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God," John 3:18; Heb. 2:3, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" chap 10:28–

29, "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God," chap. 6:6, "crucified unto themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." Thus you see that the command is peremptory, that you must believe in the name of Christ; you must receive him as the gift of God, otherwise you shall sink in the mighty waters of the deluge of eternal wrath and vengeance, and Christ himself will resent it to the uttermost, if his salvation be slighted; for he will come in flaming fire to take vengeance on all them that know not God, and who obey not this commandment of believing in the name of the only begotten Son of God, 2 Thess. 1:7–8.

Object. 1. 'I am afraid it be presumption in me to believe in and apply Christ.'

Answ. It can never be presumption to obey an express and positive command of God. Is it presumption to pray? Is it presumption to read the word? Is it presumption to hear the word? Is it presumption to sanctify God's name? and is it presumption to remember the Sabbath? You do not reckon it presumption to do any of these, because ye are commanded of God; as little can it be presumption to "believe in Christ, seeing this is his commandment," 1 John, 3:21.

Object. 2. 'I am such a great sinner, that I am afraid it is not I that is commanded to believe.'

Answ. The command of believing is to all without exception, great sinners, and sinners of a lesser size, Is. 1:8, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool:" If the command of believing were not to every one, then unbelief would not be their sin; for "where there is no law, there is no transgression," Rom. 5:13. But unbelief is a sin of the deepest dye, and makes every sin else unpardonable, by rejecting the only remedy.

Object. 3. 'You tell us, that we are commanded to believe; and yet at the same time tell us that we want power to believe; that it is the work of God, John 6:29, and that exceeding great and mighty power of God, that raised Christ from the dead, and must make us to believe,' Eph. 1:19–20.

Answ. It is very true, ye cannot believe; "No man can come to Christ, except the Father draw him," John 6:44, and yet ye are commanded to believe, not by us, but by that God that commands "things that are not as though they were," Rom. 4:17, and he commands you, impotent sinners, "dead in sin, to believe in the name of his Son that, from a sense of your own impotency, you may turn the work upon himself, as "the Author and Finisher of faith," Heb. 12:2, and his command is the vehicle of power: As when he commanded the man with the withered hand, "Stretch forth thine hand." Matth. 12:13, the poor man minted to obey, and in the mint of obedience he got power to stretch out his hand as he was commanded: So, after his example do ye. Mint at the duty, depending on the power of him who commands you to believe, that he may "fulfil in you all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power," 2 Thess. 1:11.

Object. 4. 'I have essayed and minted to believe, in obedience unto the command, and yet, alas! I am just where I was; I do not find the power of God coming along.'

Answ. Continue in the use of the means of God's appointment, to mint at believing: Continue to hear the word, and mint at mingling faith with it: Continue in prayer: and mint at believing that God will hear you; and in this way wait on the Lord. Remember the poor man that lay at the pool, John 5:5–9, for thirty-eight years, waiting for the troubling of the waters, and at last the Lord came and healed him: So do ye; for "blessed are all they that wait upon him," Psal. 37:9.

Object. 5. 'But all my labours will be in vain if I be not elected; for it is only they that are ordained to eternal life that will believe, Acts

13:48.

Answ. It is true, the election shall obtain, Rom. 11:7, though others be hardened; but let me tell you, in the matter of believing, you have no more concern with the secret counsels of God, than you have in buying or selling, eating or drinking, or such like common actions of life. If any man should say, I will not open my shop door, because I do not know if God has decreed that I should sell any wares; or, I do not know if God has ordained that any man should buy them: Or, if a man should say, I will neither eat nor drink, because God has fixed the term of my life; I am sure I shall live as long as God has ordained, whatever I do, &c.: Or, I may cast myself down a precipice, or attempt to walk upon the waters, because I shall not perish till God's appointed time come: I say, would you not reckon that man mad, or distracted, that would argue at that rate? Yet the case is the same, when he argues, That he needs not fly to Christ, or enter into the New Testament Ark, because if he be elected to eternal life he shall never perish, whether he believe or not. Sirs, let not the devil and a deceitful heart lead you in among the decrees of God, which are secret; for "the secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children," Deut. 29:29. Follow commanded duty: believe in the Son of God; and then you shall know your election of God.

THE SIXTH SERMON ON THIS TEXT

HEB. 11:7.—By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.

THE doctrine taken from the words in their typical and spiritual meaning, was as follows:

"That Christ is the great New Testament ARK, unto which perishing sinners must betake themselves, that they may be saved from the deluge of God's wrath."

The method was:

I. To speak of the deluge of God's wrath, with allusion unto the deluge of waters that destroyed the old world.

II. To speak of the warnings that God gives of the dreadful deluge of his wrath.

III. To speak of Christ as the great New Testament Ark, typified by the ark of Noah.

IV. To cast open the doors of the New Testament Ark.

V. To shew how it is that a sinner actually enters into this Ark by this door.

VI. Proceed to the application of the doctrine.

Having spoken to the first four, I proceed to

V. The fifth thing in the method, which was, to speak of the soul's actual entering by these doors into the New Testament Ark.

I find faith sometimes expressed in scripture under the notion of entering, John 10:9, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved," and Heb. 4:3, "For we who have believed do enter into rest;" ver. 7, "Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." Of the same import is that expression of turning unto Christ as a Strong-hold or Refuge, Zech. 9:12.

All I shall say upon this head is, to illustrate a little the nature of faith, under the similitude of Noah's entering into the ark, and the creatures that were saved there with him.

1. Then, we see in the text, that Noah was warned of God of his danger before he prepared an ark, or fled unto it.

Just so is it with sinners in the matter of believing in Christ; God gives the sinner warning of the danger he is in of the wrath to come. As God gave public warning to the old world, by the ministry of Noah, of the approaching deluge: so by the word read and preached, particularly by the preaching of the law, there is warning given to all sinners of the danger they are in of perishing for ever. The voice of God in the law to sinners is. Gal. 3:10, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Rom. 2:8, 9, "Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doth evil." Psal. 9:17, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God. —The wages of sin is death." Now, these and the like warnings are carried in and brought home to the soul in particular, by the power of the eternal Spirit, before the sinner enter into the New Testament Ark; and the sinner is made to believe the truth of these threatenings: For there is a law of faith, and a particular application of these and the like threatenings, before there be a true gospel faith of the remedy. Hence,

3. You see that Noah was moved with fear before he prepared an ark, or entered thereinto. What was he afraid of? say you. I answer, He was afraid of perishing in the deluge with the rest of the wicked world, (See the text.)

Just so is the case with sinners in the matter of believing, or flying to Christ; they are moved with the fear of an angry God, against whom they have sinned. And hence it is, that the sinner, through the terror of God, and of an awakened conscience, falls a trembling, with the jailor, Acts 16:30, and cries, "What shall I do to be saved?" Oh! to

whom shall I fly for help, Isa. 10:3. "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? and who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" Is. 33:14. This is what is commonly called a law-work, which every one that believes hath either in a greater or lesser degree: For "The law is our schoolmaster to lead us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith," &c., Gal. 3:24.

3. Noah renounced all the false confidences that the men of the old world betook themselves unto for shelter against the deluge. There is no doubt, but the inhabitants of the old world, when they saw the "windows of heaven opened, and the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the waters increasing and swelling," they would fly to the highest houses or mountains, to save them from the waters of the deluge, in hopes that the waters would stay before they came up where they were: But Noah knew other things; he knew that these were but lying refuges, and that the waters would overtop the highest mountains in the world: And therefore he renounced these vain refuges, and betook himself unto the ark.

Just so is it in the matter of believing in Christ, the poor soul is made to see that "in vain is salvation to be expected from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains," Jer. 3:23. "That the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies," Is. 28:17. And the waters shall overflow all these hiding places, which hypocrites, the carnal worldling, or legalist, betake themselves unto: and therefore it flies for refuge unto Christ, that blessed hope set before it, Heb. 6:18, in the gospel, knowing that there is no name given—whereby to be saved, but by the name of Jesus.

4. Noah believed that the ark (being God's ordinance) was sufficient to save him and his family from the deluge.

So in the matter of believing, Christ is taken up as an all-sufficient Saviour, "able also to save unto the uttermost, all that come unto God by him," Heb. 7:25; and as he is appointed and ordained of God to be a Saviour every way qualified for the salvation of lost sinners, and

made of God "unto us, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," 1 Cor. 1:30.

5. God gave to the living creatures (that were to be saved alive in the ark) a certain instinct, which made them to move from all parts of the earth towards the ark, and at last to enter into it.

Just so is it in the matter of believing. God gives an instinct, a supernatural instinct, unto the poor sinner, that makes him restless, until he win Christ, and be found in him, Phil. 3:8–9. This is nothing thing else but that drawing power of the word and Spirit of God, whereby the sinner is led to the Rock that is higher than all other refuges; John 6:44, "No man (says Christ) can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him;" Hos. 11:3, "I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love." You know the bees, before a shower, they, by a certain instinct, fly into the hive: Just so is it here.

6. Noah's faith rested (not in the boards of the ark, but) in God who had appointed him to prepare it.

So in the matter of believing, true faith terminates upon "God—in Christ, reconciling the world to himself," 2 Cor. 5:19. The great design of God in manifesting himself in the flesh, is not that our faith should terminate upon the Man Christ Jesus, but upon God in him. You have a word to this purpose, 1 Pet. 1:21, "Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God." So that you see, the scope of the whole work of redemption (through Christ) is to bring us to trust in God, and to place our confidence in him, as a God with us. Sirs, remember that God alone is the object of faith: and if your faith terminate upon any thing inferior to God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, it is not saving faith, for it doth not answer the very first command of the law, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," Exod. 20:3.

7. When Noah entered into the ark, it was with a resolution to abide there, until the waters of the deluge were abated.

Just so is it here; when a sinner comes by faith unto Christ for refuge, he comes with a design to abide in him, not (like Noah with his ark) for a while, but for ever. The soul in believing cries concerning Christ, "This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell;" Psal. 132:14. It is the will of Christ that we should abide in him, 1 John 2:28, "And now little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed, before him at his coming;" John 15:4-7, "I am the vine; ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

VI. The sixth thing in the method was to apply this doctrine.

And the only uses I make of the doctrine shall be in a word of trial and exhortation.

Use first shall be in a word of trial and examination.

And that which I would have you to try, is, Whether have you got into the New Testament Ark Christ, where alone a sinner can be in safety from the deluge of divine wrath. I remember John the Baptist says unto the Scribes and Pharisees, Matth. 3:7, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to fly from the wrath to come?" So say I to you; have you, upon God's warning, by the word of the law, fled for refuge unto Christ, and taken up your residence and abode in him? I offer these few marks for trial.

1. If ever you fled to the New Testament Ark, you have seen the devouring deluge of God's wrath ready to swallow you up, and you have seen yourselves upon the very brink of perishing for ever in the

deep waters, so that you have been made to cry out, Oh "what shall I do to be saved?" Acts 16:30.

2. God has broken all your false props and confidences, and made you see they are nothing but lying refuges that would betray you. So was it with Paul at his conversion, what things were gain to him, these he counted loss for Christ, Philip. 3:7. "Ashur shall not save us," Hos. 14:3.

3. You have (by the light of the word and Spirit) got such a discovery of the glory, structure, beauty, and excellency of the New Testament Ark, as has filled you with wonder and admiration at the love, mercy, and grace of God, in providing such an Ark, such a Saviour, 2 Cor. 4:6, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." Oh, will the soul say, at the sight of the Ark Christ, "What hath God wrought?" Numb. 23:23; "This is the Lord's doing, it is wonderful in our eyes," Psal. 118:23; "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh!" &c., 1 Tim. 3:16.

4. If ever you entered into the ark, you have seen a reconciled God in the Ark Christ, "For God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself," 2 Cor. 5:19. This is the very thing that induces and encourages the soul to enter into it. The poor soul could see nothing before but God a devouring fire to consume it; but, looking to Christ, it sees a smiling God, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," Matth. 17:5. O Sirs, this is the very thing that begets faith, love, hope, and confidence, God's love in giving Christ, John 3:16, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son," &c. Now, have you seen God to be love? and have you seen his love manifested in this, that he sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him? 1 John 4:9, and has the faith of this love killed your enmity?

5. If you have fled to the New Testament Ark, you will be so well pleased with your new lodging, and your safety therein, that your hearts will be filled with gratitude, and your tongues with the high praises of the Lord, that ever provided such an Ark, and that ever brought you into it. You will sing and say with the church, Micah 7:18, "Who is a God like unto thee, who pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of thine heritage;" and with David, Psal. 103 at the beginning, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:" and with Israel, when God had brought them through the Red Sea, and delivered them from the hand of the Egyptians, Exod. 15:11, "I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously," &c.

6. If you have ever fled into the Ark, then you will be new creatures; for if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things will pass away, 2 Cor. 5:17. You have got new light in your understanding, a new will and affections, you will not walk according to your old lusts in the flesh, or according to the curse of the world: no, but as the ark and they that were in it were lifted up above the earth upon the waters, towards heaven, so you will not lie grovelling upon the earth, but "seek things that are above, where Christ is," Col. 3:1.

7. You have got something of the Spirit of Christ: for if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his," Rom. 8:9. "But he that is joined unto the Lord, is one spirit," 1 Cor. 6:17. And his spirit will be in you as "a well of water springing up unto everlasting life," John 4:14. The Spirit will convince you of sin, &c.

8. If you have fled to the New Testament Ark, you will be concerned to get as many as possible into the Ark with you; and for this end you will be telling them of their danger while out of Christ, and of the great salvation that is to be found in him. How active was Paul, after he came to know Christ, to recommend him to others? Acts 9:20, &c., compared with Gal. 1:23.

Use second shall be of Exhortation to all in general.

Is it so that Christ is our great New Testament Ark, to save from the deluge of divine wrath? O then, Sirs, let me beseech and entreat you to consult your own safety, by flying into this blessed Ark, before the waters of the deluge sweep you away into a miserable eternity.

I offer a few motives to stir you up to fly into the Ark.

1. Consider, That there are innumerable multitudes of mankind that are already lost irrecoverably in the deluge of God's wrath, through their not entering into the Ark. The inhabitants of the old world that are said to be in prison, unto whom Noah preached. O what innumerable numbers of men and women have gone down to the sides of the pit since sin entered into the world; "Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat," Matth. 7:13. Now, is it not your interest to take warning from the ruin of so many?

2. Consider, That you must inevitably go the same way, I mean, perish in the deluge, except you enter into the Ark; "For there is none other name under heaven, given amongst men, whereby we must be saved, but by the name of Jesus Christ," Acts 4:12. It is not your broken planks of a profession of religion, hope in the general mercy of God, your civility, morality, legal righteousness, that will do; God's wrath will stave all these broken planks in pieces: and therefore repair to the ARK Jesus Christ.

3. There is a fixed day, a time set for your entering into the New Testament Ark, which if it be let slip, there will be no entrance into the Ark, but you shall infallibly perish in the deluge. "He that lives for ever, has sworn with his hand lifted up to heaven," that there shall be no more entrance into the Ark. Quest. What is the fixed time? Answ. It is the day of grace, the day of life, the day of salvation; if that pass, you are gone for ever: and therefore, "To-day, if you will hear his voice," Psal. 95 and Heb. 3.

4. The Ark is prepared of God for you, and that at an infinite expense. God has provided a Saviour, Psal. 89:19, "Help is laid upon one that is mighty," John 3:16, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish." The Ark is finished, and perfected, and made ready for you: "All things are ready," Matth. 22:4.

5. The Ark is at hand, it is near to us, Is. 46 at the close, Behold, "I bring near my righteousness, it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry; and I will place salvation in Zion," &c. "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is the word of faith which we preach," Rom. 10:8.

6. The Ark is ordained for men and women of our stamp, I mean men and women of the human nature: And therefore the call is "to men and the sons of men," Prov. 8:4. Christ is a Saviour, not for the fallen angels, but for us; "Unto us is this child born," Is. 9:6, he "is made of God unto us, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," 1 Cor. 1:30.

7. Many have already entered, and are saved; an innumerable company, "which no man can number," Rev. 7.

8. The doors of the Ark are cast wide open to you also, together with a promise of safety, "Whosoever believeth shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life," John 3:16.

9. The great God commands you to enter into the Ark, 1 John 3:23, "This is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ."

I conclude with a word to believers who have fled into the Ark.

(1.) By way of comfort.

1. God is with you in the Ark, "For God is in Christ," 2 Cor. 5:19, and he will never leave you, Heb. 12:5.

2. "Your life is hid with Christ in God," Col. 3:3, "Because I live, ye shall live also," John 14:19.

3. You are freed from condemnation. The law cannot curse you: though man may, yet God will not curse you, Rom. 8:1.

4. The waters of affliction shall not overwhelm you, Is. 43:2, 3 the waves they may dash, but they will turn into foam like the waves of the sea.

5. Death and the grave cannot harm you, "For you are ransomed from the power of both," Hos. 13:14.

(2.) A word of counsel to you that are in the Ark.

1. Bless God that provided the Ark.

2. Bless God that brought you into it.

3. Rejoice and glory in the Lord, triumph in him.

4. Live upon Christ, and the provision you find in the Ark.

5. Walk worthy of the Lord, unto all well-pleasing, Col. 1:10.

MONERGISM BOOKS

The New Testament Ark Opened Against the Deluge of Divine Wrath,
by Ebenezer Erskine Copyright © 2021

All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. By payment of the required fees, you have been granted

the non-exclusive, non-transferable right to access and read the text of this e-book on-screen. No part of this text may be reproduced, transmitted, downloaded, decompiled, reverse engineered, or stored in or introduced into any information storage and retrieval system, in any form or by any means, whether electronic or mechanical, now known or hereinafter invented, without the express written permission of Monergism Books.

ePub, .mobi & .pdf Editions November 2021 Requests for information should be addressed to: Monergism Books, PO Box 491, West Linn, OR 97068