

# Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

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A FAMILY SERMON.

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A Sermon

DELIVERED BY

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

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“And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark. . . . And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons’ wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood.”—Genesis vii. 1 and 7.

GOD in infinite grace had entered into covenant with Noah that he would preserve him and his family alive. The tenor of that covenant you will find in the 18th verse of the 6th chapter. “With thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons’ wives with thee.” There was a positive foretelling of Noah’s coming into the ark and finding safety. The thing was fixed, and ordained so to be, and yet, when the time came, Noah was not carried into the ark by force, nor lifted into it against his will by a benevolent violence. He was bidden to come into the ark in the most natural manner possible; and he entered it voluntarily and cheerfully. He and his family left their houses to find a home in the ark, and so they were saved. The covenant promise and purpose were fulfilled, but Noah acted in perfect freedom, as much choosing to go into the ark as others chose to keep out. Now, beloved, there is a decree in heaven ordaining the salvation of the Lord’s chosen people. It is useless to deny that decree, for even if it were not so, yet no difficulty would be withdrawn, it would only be shifted to another place. Some of us, instead of denying predestination, like to think upon it, and find rivers of consolation springing from the everlasting purpose of the living God. But, albeit that God hath purposed and decreed the salvation of his elect, yet this by no means prevents our speaking in the Lord’s name to all men; nor does it set aside the necessity that those men should cheerfully accept the gospel of God, and arouse themselves to obey its command, by the power of grace. My hearer, I cannot tell whether thy name is written in the Lamb’s book of life from before the foundation of the world, but I can assure thee that to thee is the word of this salvation sent, and that it bids thee believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, with this assurance—that if thou doest so thou shalt be saved, for so hath the

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Lord most solemnly declared. The method of the divine arrangement involves an active consent on our part and a willing obedience to the gospel command. The purpose is sure, but it is unknown and unrevealed till the gospel is made known and brought home with effectual power so that the heart accepts it, the spirit obeys it, and the man is saved—saved as a free agent, saved as a voluntary being, yet not saved apart from the secret, almighty purpose of the Most High, nor without the effectual working of his grace. And so we come here, at this time, believing that there are some in this house concerning whom the Lord hath purposed that they shall be Christ's in the day of his appearing. We address you all hoping that the Spirit of God will apply the word with special power to the chosen, that they may see that they themselves must believe in Jesus,—that they must be actively awakened to repentance, to prayer, to a change of life, to confidence in Christ. When this shall happen, then shall the covenant purpose be known to them, and fulfilled in them, for they shall be saved from the wrath to come. Not knowing, therefore, who is to come into this net, we cast it into the sea, believing that Christ knows every fish in the sea and what fish will come to the net. We do not wish to know this ourselves, for it is quite enough for us to know how to cast in the net and to be fishers of men. The practical work belongs to us, and the result we leave with the Lord.

There are two things in the two texts. The first is *the call*,—"The Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark." The second is *the obedience* to the call,—“And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark.”

#### I. First, then, THE CALL.

We remark, at the outset, that *it was a call from the Lord*. “The Lord said unto Noah.” You see Noah was familiar with other forms of calls; for he had been the instrument of many. For many years he was a preacher of righteousness, and the principal office of a preacher is to herald his Master, to make proclamations, and to call upon men in the name of the Lord to obey the Lord's word. “To you, O men, do I call, and my voice is to the sons of men.” But it was not by such calls as Noah could give that men were to be brought into the ark. For albeit we cannot doubt that he was a faithful minister, and an earnest preacher, and pleaded with the people day and night, yet, sad to tell, not one beside his own family entered into the ark through Noah's labours. Perhaps his preaching may have been useful to his wife and to his sons' wives. If so, he had no mean reward for his pains; but to all outside of his family his word seems to have been powerless, as to delivering them from death by the devouring flood. But now he was to know something of another call, differing in many respects, a call from the Lord of heaven and earth whose word is with power. The preacher can only give the general call, and it is his duty to give it to all around him. He is to stand in the streets and lanes of the city, and bid men come to the feast of grace; yea, he is to go into the highways and hedges, and, as far as he can, to compel them to come in. But men do not come upon our compulsion, or upon our call, unless a secret something goes with our pleadings—a mysterious power, quiet, silent, omnipotent, making the voice of man to be the voice of the Holy Ghost, and hiding within the shell of the outward call the kernel of the inner call.

When the Lord said to Noah, "Come thou," he did come. He did not put it off, and say that surely it was meant for others; he felt it to be *a personal call*. It was "Come *thou*." He knew that it was for himself. God the Holy Spirit speaks home to the inmost soul when he speaks to save: there is no putting off his voice as though directed to another. Noah did not feel inclined to controvert, or plead for delay, or object, or make excuses, or say he could not, for when the Lord said to Noah "Come thou," Noah did come. *The call was effectual*, and resistance was out of the question. It is true the Lord had, in a measure, spoken to the rest of mankind by Noah's ministry, but that form of the Lord's speaking in common pleadings and invitations can be resisted to men's destruction. They could close their ears against the common call, and they did, for it was true then as it is now, "many are called, but few are chosen." Myriads go to destruction with the honest call of God ringing in their ears which they wilfully reject.

"The worldlings wilfully went on  
Rebellious, till their day was past;  
They forc'd the lingering deluge down  
And perish'd in their sins at last."

When that silent call comes, which we are accustomed to speak of as "effectual calling," then, if there be resistance, it is sweetly overcome. The will finds itself no longer headstrong and obstinate; the judgment, darkened before, becomes light; and the soul, aforesaid motionless, cries "Draw me, I will run after thee." Happy are the men to whom such a call comes from God himself. I ask you, my dear hearers now present, whether you have ever had God dealing with you in this powerful, this inward, this spiritual manner; for, if not, I am sure you have never come to Christ. If you have received no call but such as I can give you, such as my brethren who aid me can give you, such as the most earnest evangelist can give you, you have been called in vain, and are yet in your sins. If you are, indeed, the people of God you must know that a voice in your souls, mysteriously persuasive and overpowering, has spoken to you, and said, "Come to Jesus," and you have yielded to it. Happy are you to-night if you have been so called, for it is written, "Whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified."

Now, note that this call from God was of such a tenor, that Noah was bound personally to come; it was *a call to personal action*. Noah must come. "Come thou." It was not a call of this kind—"Now, Noah, sit where you are, and you will be right. Wait, Noah; patiently, quietly wait, and see what God will do." But, no; it said to Noah, "Come thou." Noah must come, and he must come *to the ark* too. For him there was only one way of salvation, any more than for anybody else. He must come to the ark which God had bidden him prepare as the instrument of safety: and he must come *into* it. It was of no use his coming near it, but he must come into it. Within its wooden walls he must hide himself; within its vast chambers he must find a dwelling. And so, dear soul, when God calls thee he will make thee feel that thou must come to Jesus—not wait and delay, but come by a distinct act of the soul to be immediately performed; and you

must come to *Christ* too; for believing in anything else will destroy rather than save you. Your faith must come and place her whole reliance upon the great sacrifice of Christ. You must come *into* Christ too—so near to him as to be in him, to make him your hiding place and your refuge from the storm. You must have an inward faith which takes you into the very inwards of Christ, hides you in his wounds, conceals you within himself. When God calls Noah it is, “Come *into* the ark;” and when God calls any sinner to himself it is, “Come to Christ; be hidden in Christ that you may be preserved as the Lord’s choice treasure.” Come, make the Lord Jesus your refuge, your deliverance, and your habitation.

Now, it would have been of no use for Noah to have gone on making preparations for his dwelling in the ark: that he had done long enough. He had gathered all sorts of food for all the creatures that were to be lodged in that marvellous menagerie; and now that he is bidden to enter the ark he does not say, “I must gather more hay, and store up more corn and fruits.” No, “Come thou into the ark” finished all his labours, he must have done with preparing, and actually enter the refuge. I know some of you have been thinking about your souls, and praying, and reading good books, and attending meetings, and trying to get instruction. Well, so far, so good; but that is not the way by which you will find salvation, the call of God to your soul, is “Come into the ark,” or, in other words, come now to Jesus, and distinctly and finally commit yourself to him, just as Noah put himself in the ark, to sink in the ark or swim in the ark; to live in the ark or die in the ark. He committed his whole future to the ark, and that is what you have to do: commit yourself, and all that is about you, entirely to the Lord Jesus Christ. Considerations, resolutions, and preparations must come to an end and you must in very deed “come *into* the ark.”

“O Jesus, Saviour of the lost,  
Our ark and hiding place,  
By storms of sin and sorrow toss’d  
We seek thy shelt’ring grace.

“Forgive our wand’ring and our sin,  
We wish no more to roam;  
Open the ark and take us in,  
Our soul’s eternal home.”

Neither would it have done for Noah to go round the ark to survey it again. No doubt he had examined before that ark of gophir wood, and been pleased to think its timbers were so sound. No insect could eat that bitter wood. It was a tree that would not rot. No doubt he was pleased with the architecture of the vessel, for he had built it with no surveyor there but his God, and it was therefore well built. God was the great Master of Noah’s navy-yard, and had given him plans and specifications. It was quite right that Noah should go and look the huge vessel up and down, and see to the caulking, and make sure that it was well pitched within and without with pitch, and so on: but now he must give up surveying and come to inhabiting: he must come into the ark to remain in it. And so I like you, my dear hearers, to take an interest in the person of Christ, and in the way of salvation.

It is a very hopeful sign when you survey the Ark of salvation and say, "How stoutly built, and how thoroughly well caulked it is; never were timbers better put together, there is no fear of a leakage here; she will live out every storm that will ever beat upon her; she is a true life-boat upon a stupendous scale." I like to hear a sinner say "Christ is a great Saviour: I perceive that he is able to save to the uttermost, and I wonder at the wisdom and the goodness of God that he has devised such a way of salvation." So far, so good, dear friend, but all your admiration of Jesus will not save you. You must come inside his ark. By a simple faith you must at once give yourselves up to Jesus to be saved *in him*. No longer look at Christ externally, nor survey him even with a grateful eye for what he has done for others, but come now and commit yourself to him. There stands the door, and you have to go through it, and enter into the inner chambers, or you will find no safety.

Neither would it have been of any use for Noah to go up to the ark and stand against the door and say, "I do not say that I am not going in, and I do not even say that I am not in already; I have got one foot in, but I am a moderate man, and like to be friendly with both sides. I am in and yet not in. If the door was shut I do not know but that it would cut me in halves; but, anyhow, I do not want to be altogether out, and I do not want to be quite in. I should like to stand where I could hurry in as soon as I saw the water coming up; but, still, while there is another opportunity of taking a walk on the dry land I may as well avail myself of it. There is no hurry about it, is there? You see, if a man keeps his finger on the latch of the door he can pop in as soon as ever he sees the first drop of rain descending, or the water coming up anywhere near him; but is there any reason for being so decided all at once? Everybody likes his liberty, you know, and does not want to be shut in before he needs to be, at any rate." No, that would not do for Noah. God said to him, "*Come into the ark,*" and he went in at once. Noah must not hesitate, or linger, or halt, but in he must go: right in. And, O dear souls, you that linger, you that are of two opinions, if you were wise, and did but know the danger of being outside, and the bliss of being inside, instead of hesitating you would want to penetrate into the ark's inmost recesses, and to take your place in the very centre, just as I desire to go right to the heart of Christ, into the very centre of his inmost love, for there only shall I be perfectly at rest. Do not hesitate! Decide! Decide at once! May the Spirit of God lead you so to do. I know you will not delay if the effectual call is now being given; you will be obedient to the heavenly vision at once.

Now, go a little further. It is God that calls, and *Noah must in very deed, personally and actually come*. It is said, "*Come into the ark.*" Now, notice that word, for it teaches us that in entering the ark Noah would be *coming close to his God*. "Come thou"—Why did it not say, "*Go thou?*" Why, because God was inside and meant to be inside, in the ark, along with Noah, and therefore he said, "*Come thou.*" Oh that blessed "*come*"! We had it the other night, you know when we preached from, "*Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden.*" "*Come*": that is the grace word; but, oh, it is the

glory word too, for Christ will say at the last, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world." "Come." "God is in Christ Jesus, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;" and he that comes to Christ comes to God. If you find rest in Christ you will only do what the great God has done before you, for he rests in Christ Jesus. He smells a sweet savour of rest in the Redeemer's sacrifice. If you delight in Christ you will only do what God has always been doing, for he delights in his Son: "This is my beloved Son," said he, "in whom I am well pleased." There is no coming to the Father but by Christ, but he that comes to Christ hath come to the Father, and he hath seen and known the Father. Coming to Christ is coming to God.

Now observe that what is meant here is this—that *dwellers in Christ are dwellers with God*. To live in the ark was to live with God. Dwellers in Christ are under the protection of God, for to dwell in the ark was to have God for a guardian. Noah did as much as say, when he passed into the ark, "God is here, and I have come to live with him. God is master and protector here, and I am come to be protected by him." O soul, when thou canst say, "I trust in Christ," then thou mayest go on to say, "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations." You may "joy in God through Jesus Christ, by whom also we have received the atonement." Ah, how near to God that man is who dwells in Christ! When Christ is all in all to thee, the Father himself loveth thee, and thou mayest rejoice in a consciousness of communion and fellowship with him.

Now, notice that *when Noah came to the ark he must come there to find his all in it*. All the food he wants he must find in the ark. Mistress Noah cannot go out to market any more, her daughters can no longer go to the shops and the stores. Noah's sons cannot farm or trade, or hunt or dig for gold. Houses, lands, *treasures*, will soon lie deep at the bottom of the flood. All Noah has is in the ark, it is his sole possession, his all, for which he has suffered the loss of all things and rejoices to have so done. From the time of his entrance he is to find all his *pleasure* in the ark. There are no outdoor amusements for himself or his family; he cannot even find pleasure in the scenery, for that is blotted out by the deluges of rain; the valleys have vanished and even the hills have disappeared as the deluge has increased. If he is to find any pleasure, he must find it inside the ark. It was a melancholy prospect, indeed, if he could look out from the window, but his joy and delight lay within the chambers of the ark, for there was he saved, and there he dwelt with God. All his *food* also to supply his necessities he must find inside the ark. He had no barn nor warehouse to look to, and there was no port at which he could touch to take in cargo. Whatever need might arise it must be met by the stores within the ark, for there was nothing outside but death. All his *work* was inside the ark too. He had nothing to do now except within that vessel, no fields to plough, no shops to keep, nothing to do but what was inside the ark. Now, when a soul comes to Christ, it commits itself to him for everything: Christ must feed it; you must eat no longer for your soul anything but the bread of heaven, Jesus must become meat and drink to you, for "his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed."

Now you are to find your pleasure in him—your choicest delights, your sweetest joys, all in Christ Jesus, who is our hope, our crown, our delight, our heaven. And now, henceforth, your service must be to him only. “You are not your own, you are bought with a price,” and all that you have to do in this world now lies within the circumference of Christ’s will. The commonest duties of life are now to be brought within the sacred circle. You have nothing to do outside in the waters of sin and self and Satan. You need neither fish in the waters of sin, nor go boating upon the waves of worldliness; you are in danger if you do. You are inside the ark, shut in with God, dead to the world, and only alive in Christ Jesus, that you may be floated in him out of the old world into “the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

Thus, you see, Noah in coming into the ark left everything and found everything, even as by us the world is forsaken and Jesus becomes our all.

“Jesus, I my cross have taken,  
All to leave, and follow thee;  
Destitute, despised, forsaken;  
Thou, from hence, my all shalt be:  
Let the world despise and leave me;  
They have left my Saviour too:  
But my Lord will not deceive me;  
And in him my all I view.”

Again, *Noah must come into the ark never to go out again.* “Come thou,” saith God, “into the ark.” He is not to make a visit, but he is to be shut in. As far as that world was concerned, Noah was to be in the ark as long as it lasted. When the new world came, then he walked out in joyful liberty. But you and I, dear brethren, are in Christ, not to be there for a time, but to abide in him for ever and ever. If any man thinketh to get any good by a transient profession of Christ, that man is grossly mistaken. If you imagine that you can take up religion and put it down again—that you can be believers to-day and unbelievers to-morrow, you know nothing of the grace of God; for the grace of God begets a life, and that life is incorruptible and abideth for ever: nothing can destroy it or remove it. He that is really in Christ is like Noah in the ark, he is shut in by God’s own hand. “None shall pluck them out of my hand,” says Christ, and, truly, none shall ever take a soul out of the grip of Jesus Christ who is once within it. Ye come to Christ to be married to him. Ye take him, to have him and hold him from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, and death itself shall not part you. “Who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?”

Noah, according to the Lord’s command, *must come in at once.* “And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou into the ark”—come at once, “for yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth.” There was a door to the ark, and that door was open, indeed we are not told that it had ever been shut since it had been made. There it stood, wide open. We never hear of anybody that ever went in and was driven out, never

hear of a single beast or bird, or even creeping thing, that ever went in there and was cast out. So long as the door was open whosoever came was welcome, but longsuffering was drawing to an end. The time was now come for Noah to go in, and the time was also near when the door must be shut. And so, when the Spirit of God comes to persuade men sweetly in effectual calling, it is always in the present tense. The Lord never called any man by effectual grace to believe in Christ next week. He calls them to believe in Christ directly, and one of the ways by which the effectual call may be judged is its presentness and its pressing character. It is "now, *now*, NOW." Oh, may the divine Spirit be pleading in some heart at this hour, and saying, "Come to Jesus *now*, ere the next word has left the speaker's mouth. Put thou thy trust in Jesus ere this service ends, and thou shalt go thy way to thy chamber and to thy bed justified and saved." The Spirit of God sweetly puts it, "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation;" even as he did with Noah, who never dreamed of delays, but, when bidden to come, came there and then.

"Come to the ark : the waters rise,  
The seas their billows rear ;  
While darkness gathers o'er the skies,  
Behold a refuge near.

"Come to the ark, all, all that weep  
Beneath the sense of sin :  
Without, deep calleth unto deep ;  
But all is peace within.

"Come to the ark, ere yet the flood  
Your lingering steps oppose ;  
Come, for the door which open stood  
Is now about to close."

And now notice, once more—and that is a sweet part of it—that the Lord said, "Come thou *and all thy house* into the ark." How good it is of the Lord to think of our children! That he should save us, oh, we must always bless him for that! But that he should have a word for our wife, a word for our son, and a word for our daughter—this is overflowing mercy! I have heard of a man who was unkind enough to say that he married his wife, but he did not intend to marry all her family; and it sometimes happens that your love to a person is a good deal tried by that person's relatives and friends: but when the Lord Jesus Christ takes to his heart the master or the mistress of a house, he is willing to take all the household. He came to the jailor's house at Philippi, and he looked on him with love, but he did not stay with him only, he blest all his household—so blest them that they were all brought to believe in the Lord, and they were all baptized there and then. There have been other households upon which the Lord has looked in the same way. "Come thou and thy house," is it not? Am I reading correctly? Look at the passage; look at it. It is not merely, "Come thou and thy house." We will read it again. "The Lord said to Noah, come thou and *all thy house* into the ark." "ALL." Oh, that blessed comprehensive word, "all." Then Ham was not left out. Japhet the elder, as he is called in Genesis x. 21—I know not much for him or against him, but he had faith enough to enter the ark, and he was saved

like the rest. Shem, the second of the household, if I may judge from his descendants, was always a religious young man, devout, and attached to the worship of the true God: he also entered the ark, and was saved. As for Ham, the scapegrace of the family, it might have been feared that he would not come in; but notwithstanding all that the Scripture tells us against him, he was assuredly saved in the ark. And here was the mercy—that to Japhet, the elder, and to Shem and to Ham, the promise extended. “Come thou and *all* thy house into the ark.” My dear brother, when you are converted yourself it is a blessing that you have so far a hold of the gospel, but go on to grasp more of it. “What must I do to be saved?” said the jailor; and Paul replied, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” Many cannot get to the second part of the promise. They seem satisfied if they themselves are saved; but oh for that faith which takes all that the gospel is prepared to give, and pleads with God that not only I may be saved, but my house, ay, and *all* my house, without exception.

II. Here is the call, then; the Lord called effectually Shem, Ham, and Japhet, and their wives, so that they all came into the ark. Of that we are going to speak for a few minutes on the second head, which is THE OBEDIENCE. Noah came into the ark and his wife, and his sons and their wives. *Their obedience was unquestioning.* We do not find them asking anything at all about the reason for the command; but they came as they were bidden. They passed through the doorway, and they were all in the ark. Fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, sons and their wives, daughters and their husbands, and all of you, oh that the blessed Spirit would put you now into such a frame of mind that you should at once yield to the divine precept which says, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” Have you not asked questions enough? You have had some of them answered, but every answer has only helped you to invent another dozen questions. Oh, those questions! those quibbles! those debates! those doubts! those cavillings! They are ruining thousands. Have you ever heard of the man who sat at the table and could not eat till he knew the pedigree of the bullock from which the joint was cut; and then he must needs know how it was cooked, and comprehend the influence which fire has over flesh to make it eatable. Next he must understand anatomy, and know how the stomach acts upon the food, and what the gastric juice is made of, and how food is assimilated; unless he could get plain answers to every enquiry he would not eat. He said, “Plain answers, mind, plain answers to all my questions, or I will never put a mouthful between these lips again.” Now, there was a poor countryman who came out of the field, and saw the meat and potatoes, and he ate them all up while the man was asking the questions; and very wise he was too. I suppose it was his hunger that made him so sensible. May the Lord give you a hunger after the gospel, and if you have it, you will fall to feeding upon it, and receive it into your soul. You will just take what is set before you by infinite love, and leave quibblers to their own folly. I myself have a lot of questions, for the questions I have been asked by sceptics I have put away along with a lot more of my own which are far more difficult than theirs. I mean to bring them out one day, but not until I get to

heaven myself, and carry all I can with me. We shall have light enough there to see by; it is like reading in the dark down here. We will leave these questions till we get into the blaze of glory, and perhaps they will then answer themselves. Noah and his wife and his sons and their wives did not worry themselves about mysteries, but obeyed the plain command and went into the ark and were saved.

*They went in directly*, but I will not dwell upon that. The whole eight of them passed in at once! To get eight people of a mind to go anywhere is a difficult thing; but here they were, all of a mind, and all ready to start, and they all went into the ark there and then. It is wondrous that Mistress Shem did not say that she could not leave all her acquaintances, and forsake her father and all her relations at once. How could she tear herself away? Good Mistress Japhet might have felt bonds which hold her to her bosom friends. But so it was: the effectual call went through all the family, men and women, and they took up their separated position, coming out of the world at once when the command came. O, blessed Spirit, give such a call as that to whole families!

All these eight people came away *once for all*. They could each say,—

“Farewell, vain world, I must be gone,  
Thou art no home, no rest for me;  
Henceforth my heart must dwell alone,  
And have no fellowship with thee.

Farewell, poor world, for thou must die,  
E'en now the floods begin to rise.  
I die to thee without a sigh,  
Save that I mourn thy blinded eyes.”

There was a closed door between the family of Noah and all the rest of the world. They went in to be the minority, and turned out, before long, to be the majority. Oh, that men would be willing to be the minority in a wicked world, and to be counted fools. People say, “If you join that church, you just shut yourself out from all society: nobody will ever know you any more. You might as well be dead and buried.” But, truly, when a soul gives itself to Christ it feels itself to be dead and buried to the world, and says to it “Adieu, we are henceforth strangers.” The regenerate pass straight away from communion with this world, to hold all their communion inside the ark—to have all their fellowship in connection with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now to Noah and to his wife and to all the family *this was the most important event that ever happened to them*. When all of them passed out of the world together to find their refuge where God had provided it—it was *the great day* with Noah's household. What a glorious day it is with men and women when they come to Christ! Their birthday is noteworthy, but this is better. They were only born to sorrow and death at first: now are they born to heaven and eternal life. Their marriage-day! This is better. They were but joined to a mortal in bonds that death will sever, but now are they married unto Christ in everlasting wedlock.

Moreover, simple as the act of going into the ark may seem, *it was*

one of the most remarkable events in human history. When Noah and his family entered into the ark it was a more important day than when empires rise or fall, for there would have been an utter end of the human race if it had not been for their decided action on that memorable day. So, when men give themselves to Christ, they do not know what mighty things they are doing for their posterity and for those immediately around them. Time and eternity quiver with the force of their deed. These converts will be a blessing to the town in which they live, a blessing to the society in which they move. The salvation of that woman will be the salvation of her grandchildren, and of their children and right on. Who knows, when a man is born to God, but that there shall spring from him in future years a godly seed that shall become ministers of Christ and missionaries of the cross? It is a grand event when a family is saved. I heard some music in the street just now, and it seemed to me to be playing in good time to keep tune with the joy we ought to feel when father, mother, sons, and daughters enter the ark of Christ and find salvation there. Oh, if households enter into Christ, the very bells of heaven may ring again and again and again with a joy that hath many joys within it.

Now let us go into details. The first fact is that *Noah went in*. This was right! Noah was the leader. The husband is the head of the household, or ought to be, and he should go to Christ first. Whether his wife comes in, or Shem, or Ham comes in, whoever will come in, or stay out, Noah goes in first, for he would obey the Lord. Head of the house, are you in the ark? Are you in Christ? You are a father, you have sons grown up around you, are you decided? You wish your family to grow up in the fear of God; I hope you do. But how can you expect it if you are not saved yourself? If Noah had not gone into the ark, I should not expect to read that Shem and Ham and Japhet went in. O you that are heads of households, your position is very responsible. You will have to bear much blame if your children go astray. Unless your example is decided for the Lord, they will be able to say at the last great day, "Our father was half-hearted, and how could we be expected to give our hearts to God?"

Next *his sons* are mentioned. "Noah went in and his sons"—three fine fellows. A happy father is he who has sons that will go with him in the things of God. Sons are called in Hebrew "builders," because they build up a man's house; may the Holy Spirit build them into the church. I would to God there were more young men joining the church—that more sons were decided! You cannot expect, can you, to see the sons' wives brought unless the sons are on the Lord's side? But, I am sorry to say, they are often opposers; and, when the women are brought to Christ, there are the husbands standing back, and even acting as a hindrance to the religion of their wives. God grant it may not be so in any case here! O son of Noah, go into the ark with your father. O child of a godly parent, follow your father to Christ, that you may follow him to heaven. Let Abraham's son be an Isaac, and Isaac's son be a Jacob, and Jacob's son be a Joseph; and so may it go on from generation to generation.

The next person who is mentioned is *the old lady*—namely, Noah's wife. I give her that name because she was, no doubt, somewhere about

six hundred years old, and she was assuredly an eminent woman. We usually describe persons who have grown up sons by that name in our family circles. The wife of the father of three sons comes into the ark. I think of her as of a queenly dame with her sons and their wives, coming boldly forward with a quiet grace and firmness to go with her beloved husband to sink or swim with him, casting in her lot with him, not only because he was her husband, but because he had cast in his lot with God. Oh, beloved woman, advancing into years, with a grown-up family about you, if you have not come to Christ I trust you may, that in your family the saved ones may be as Noah and his sons *and his wife*.

Last came *the sons' wives*, and what a happy circumstance for them! I was thinking, as I turned over the subject, how painful it would have been if one of the boys had not come in, and then how grievous it would have been if one of the wives had not come. If Noah had been obliged to know that one of them should be left out, and he had to have the dreadful selection, whom do you suppose he would have left out? I cannot imagine. I have heard of the Irishman with his seven or eight children, and someone was willing to adopt one; but the question was—which was it to be? One is to be taken out of the family and they are not to see it again, it is to be brought up and taken care of by a stranger: the father and mother could never agree which it should be. I hope, dear fathers and mothers, you will never agree to have *one* of your children lost. Make it your daily and nightly prayer, your incessant effort, your hourly desire, that not only Shem and Ham and Japhet may be brought, but their wives too, till not one shall be left behind, but the whole family shall be saved in Christ Jesus.

Now, all this was done by the sweet, effectual calling of the Divine Spirit; and let us pray to-night, each one, that the same call may be given to all our friends, and kinsfolk, and all assembled here, that we may be all in Christ, both now and in the last great day. Amen.

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PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Genesis vii.

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HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—429, 501, 489.