

that is, he was comparatively perfect. He was "a just man, and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God" (chap. vi. 9). He was faithful among the faithless—devout towards God, and conscientiously just in his dealings with men. And surely it is well with the righteous. The singular preservation of Noah illustrates this.

'But (2.) We must not suppose that Noah's personal worth justified him before God, or was the meritorious cause of the distinction conferred upon him. It is observable that before we are told of his righteousness, we are told that Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord (chap. vi. 8). From grace as the source, all his goodness proceeded. His own righteousness was not previous to grace, nor independent of it. His goodness was not indigenious any more than that of other men. He was a sinner like others; yea, when made a child of grace, evinced his liability, like all the rest, to fall into sin. And—

(3.) As grace was the source of his goodness, so faith was its immediate spring or root. To faith and not to works he owed his acceptance with God; though the fruits of his faith, as in all believers, were pleasing and acceptable. But Noah was no exception to the rule that our persons must be accepted first, and then our works; and both through Christ, and for His sake. See accordingly the testimonies to this patriarch's faith. Is he not enumerated in the epistle to the Hebrews (chap. xi) among the elders who by faith obtained a good report? And, lest we should suppose that his faith justified him, by its inherent virtue, as simply being a disposition acceptable to God, see how the apostle distinguishes the object of Noah's belief from the belief itself—telling us that he became "an heir of the righteousness which is by faith." In other words, he was accepted on the ground of a righteousness without

himself—the same which makes every sinner who receives it just. Add to this, that he is called a preacher of righteousness (2 Pet. ii.); and can we doubt that the testimony of Jesus was the spirit of his prophesying as of all other prophecy? The act of worship here recorded in connection with Noah confirms this. For, whence this early rite of sacrifice? whence its value with God? Can it be that in smelling a sweet savour, Jehovah had regard to the blood of an animal, or its flesh burnt at his altar, as a thing of any inherent worth? Does He need to eat the flesh of bulls, or to drink the blood of goats? No! "The cattle (says he) on a thousand hills are mine." There is no accounting for the ancient use of this bloody rite but by admitting its reference to the true Lamb of God, the real propitiatory sacrifice of Christ. In Him it is that God is well pleased; and it may be observed that the very words denoting the acceptance of the typical offering, are applied in the New Testament to the antitypical: "walk in love (Eph. v. 2), as Christ also hath loved us and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour"—Not in the blood of a mere animal, clean or unclean; not in the fire which consumed its flesh, did Jehovah rest complacent; but he took well at the hand of his worshipper as expressed by these symbols, the confession of sin's demerit on the one hand, and the faith in the provision for its expiation by the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, on the other. This alone reconciled God—this made the sky serene over the head of Noah—this averted wrath—this—faith in this—obtained the blessing—the promise of temporal as well as spiritual blessing.

(4.) It follows from these views, that Noah, in receiving the promise in the text, is not to be considered a public representative head of mankind in any such sense