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"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem! let my right hand forget its cunning."—Ps. 137, v.5.

Sermon

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The Necessity of Striving.

"Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many. I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."—LUKE xiii. 23, 24.

In discoursing these words, it may be proper to show,

I. What it is to be saved, or to enter into life.

II. How it is difficult to be saved, and why the gate that leadeth unto life is called strait.

III. That many who seek to enter in shall not be able; and then conclude by urging the necessity of striving, and stating the encouragements to do so.

It is proposed, then, to show,

I. What it is to be saved, or to enter into life.

Salvation is a relative term, and implies an exposure to evil or danger. If it be imagined that man, by nature, is in a state of security and happiness, salvation becomes an empty name, and all the images of joyfulness and delight which it brings along with it vanish like the dreams of the morning. Take away the fact that man is liable to suffer punishment after death, and religion, with all its precautions, and all its expedients, falls to the ground. This is the very corner stone upon which the whole fabric of religion rests; and yet there is no truth, in the whole circle of knowledge, which is met with a

more ready and indignant resistance. There is no topic which is listened to with greater uneasiness and distrust than that which goes to prove the sinfulness and peril of our natural condition. When men look abroad upon the world, they see happiness reflected from a thousand objects, and pleasure flowing in innumerable channels. The liveliness of their fancy and the warmth of their feelings shed a glowing light upon everything around them; and after gazing upon earthly glories till they grow giddy, because they cannot discern their danger, they conclude that they are safe. Their hearts become attached to the world and its objects, and they cry out with exulting satisfaction, It is good for us to be here. When Religion lifts her warning voice, and tells them that this is not their rest, that the scene which now seems so fair and attractive must soon wither and vanish, that the earth and all that is therein must one day be burnt up, and that they must go out of it, bearing with them the stamp of a deep condemnation, or the hopes of a joyful acquittal—either to find admittance at the strait gate that leadeth unto life, or to take the broad way that leadeth unto destruction—they affect to be struck and startled by the magnitude of the subject. They wonder how the world can look so fair, and its inhabitants feel so light-hearted and careless, while they are exposed to an alternative so dreadful. They ask if we have made no miscalculation in the matter—if our professional anxiety for their welfare may not have carried us beyond the bounds of truth and soberness; and they are even ready to hint a suspicion that we have a devil, or that too much learning has made us mad. They call on us to throw aside all prejudice and system—to come forth from the gloom of our closet into the daylight of