

gate, and by what means we may be enabled to enter. First, *it does concern us much to know whether we ourselves shall be saved.*

St Luke tells us that a man who had been listening to Our Lord's teaching asked Him : « Lord, are there few that are saved ? » He seems to have come to the conclusion that this must be the case by contrasting Our Lord's doctrine of holiness with the general life of men. He asks Our Lord whether he is right in his conclusion. Our Divine Redeemer gives him no direct answer, for it really did not matter to the questioner, nor does it matter to us to know the state of the world and what will be the final result of the struggle between God's grace and mercy and men's wickedness. But it does concern us much to know whether we ourselves shall be saved, and whether we are taking effectual means to be saved. Therefore He replied : « Do you, at least, strive to enter by the narrow gate ? » It was as if He said : « You think the gate of heaven is a narrow one ; you think salvation must be very difficult. Well, you are right, the matter is difficult enough, the risk is very great. Do not imitate the conduct of the multitude, as if what so many do cannot be wrong or perilous. Do not even think you are safe because you have some desire to save your souls, and are making some effort, and are as good as some of your neighbors, who are accounted to be respectable and religious-minded men. No, do not be satisfied with this, but be in earnest, use all your efforts, strive with all your might ; for there will be many who will only make a feeble and insufficient effort to enter by the gate of life, and they will not be able to enter it.

You must not misunderstand Our Lord's words. He does not say : « Seek to enter, for many seek but cannot. » He says : « Strive to enter, for many « only » seek and cannot. » Why can they not ? Because they do not strive, but only seek. The word Our Lord used, which is translated in English, « strive, » is a very forcible word. It means, strain every muscle, like a wrestler. Force your way into heaven, cost what it may.

The word « seek » may, perhaps, be understood in another way not of those who seek too indolently, but of those who seek earnestly, indeed, but too late. This meaning seems probable, because Jesus-Christ says, not « many seek, » but many