

## THE STRAIT GATE.

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Many of my readers will recall that turn-gate by which all the thousands of visitors were admitted to the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia. However many came up, the gate turned for each person separately; they passed in one by one to the enjoyments and privileges provided for them. The managers of the Exhibition had a perfect right to stipulate the place, the terms, and the manner of admission.

In like manner, the Lord of heaven and earth has announced the terms and the method of admission into the privileges of salvation and the possession of eternal life. "Enter ye in at the strait gate" This is Christ's own invitation into the kingdom. Two ways into eternity are before every soul one of them is broad, and has abundant latitude for every opinion and license for every sort of practice; it is popular and crowded, but it leadeth to destruction. The other way is narrow, because it has its limitations as to conduct and character; God has set up walls of everlasting right, and whoever leaps over them is a transgressor. One is the wrong road, the other is the right road. One leads to perdition the other to heaven. And everybody is at this moment in one or the other of these roads. It does not require any effort to discover the broad gate or any self-denial to enter it. Simply follow out the devices and desires of the carnal heart, and you are there. Satan has many "criers," and all manner of alluring enticements are flaunted at the portals.

Dr. Thompson in "The Land and the Book," tells us that he has often seen the strait gates and narrow ways in Palestine, with here and there a traveller. They are sometimes in retired places, and are opened only to those who knock; when the night comes on, they are shut up and locked. How descriptive of the way of salvation; Bunyan has the same thought in his immortal allegory; no one enters the Celestial City who had not previously entered the "wicket-gate." There is no such thing as reaching heaven by cutting "cross lots."

Christ is the door, and the only door. When he says "Come unto Me" He invites and directs you to the strait gate. The Divine Spirit leads you only to Jesus, and the Word points to none other name by which you can be saved. You are shut up to salvation by the atoning

Saviour; and what a blessed thing it is that you are not diverted or distracted by having to choose between a dozen different roads. Is the gateway of life opened to everybody unconditionally? No. One term of admission is *repentance of sin*. Over that narrow gate God's hand has written, "Except ye repent, ye shall perish." When Peter proclaimed the original Gospel Message, he was careful to say that God had sent His Son Jesus to "bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." Repentance is not mere sorrow, or mere change of feeling; it is a *change of purpose* in regard to your sins. With grief and hatred of sin, you must *turn from* it, with endeavor, after another, and a better style of character and life.

That gate is too narrow, my dear friend, to admit a thousand things which find a wide berth in the world's broad road. Pride cannot drive through in its coach and four. Sensuality cannot roll in its pipes and casks of favorite indulgences. Selfishness cannot smuggle through the gate whatever it craves; deceit will encounter a sharp-eyed detective there, for the All-seeing One reads the inmost thoughts of the heart. It is neither for your good or for God's glory that any of your favorite sins should be passed through at the gate. The cleaner and the clearer you can come in, the better. Yet how gracious and loving is the invitation to fling away your sins, and to hasten to Him whose blood cleanseth the soul from its deadly diseases and damning guilt!

The very act of entering through Christ as the appointed door is an act of *faith*. When I deposit my pence at the narrow entrance of the Brooklyn Bridge, I perform the most decisive act of belief and entire confidence in that solid structure, as my direct way over to New York. That step not only attests my opinion of the bridge, but puts me on it. Faith takes me through the gate, and while I had nothing to do with the building of the bridge, I have everything to do in walking across it. God's free grace constructed the strait road to eternal life; His love invites and entreats you to enter it, but faith is the vital indispensable step through that gate into a Christian character and Christian style of living. If any man be in Christ, i. e., inside of the strait gate, he is a new creature. Regeneration is right at that spot. Life begins there, for he that hath the Son hath life, and there is no condemnation to every one who is in Christ Jesus. If the gate is narrow the process of admis-