

which he did not need for himself—God himself became the surety of the sinner, and did that which no other being in the very nature of things could have done. The Lord became the surety of a creature, and that his own law might be magnified! Just as if a person to whom a debt was owing, should not merely forgive the debt, but should himself work with his own hands, to put the debtor in possession of the means for ever to cancel his obligation. How marvellous the provisions of redemption! How wonderful the economy of grace! By this righteousness, which Christ wrought out all who believe are justified. What is necessary on the sinner's part is faith in Christ, faith in his righteousness; for as many as believe in him are justified from all things. Their sins are no longer accounted theirs, and Christ's righteousness is imputed to them. *Faith* acknowledges, receives, and relies on Christ's righteousness. The sinner believes in Christ for righteousness, being destitute of all righteousness of his own; and Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believes. The sinner has thus a righteousness, though it is the imputed righteousness of Christ. His sins are not now accounted to him; and he escapes the punishment of them; and through the imputation of Christ's righteousness he has now a title to eternal life. Heaven is now open to him—Christ has thus opened a gate to it; and as many as enter by that gate shall have everlasting life. There is no other gate, or mode of entrance. Every false religion, every delusion of man on the matter of salvation, every mistaken hope and unfounded expectation, are but so many false ways, so many wrong doors, or gates, substituted in place, or devised in ignorance, of the only true way, or gate of life. "I am the way," says Christ—"I am the door." "By me, if any man shall enter in." And what impiety must it be to try to substitute another! He is the infallible way—the certain, the unerring, gate to life. No one ever entered by this gate, and was lost. How many, on the other hand, have perished because they would not enter by this gate! And this leads us to consider why it is called a strait gate; and so few enter by it; and many who seek to enter by it are not able.

It is not a strait gate in itself considered, or because the righteousness of Christ is not sufficient to justify every sinner of mankind. It is more than suf-

ficient for this purpose. It is a righteousness which wants nothing, which is absolutely perfect. Christ perfectly obeyed the law which the sinner had broken; and he did not do this for himself, but for sinners of mankind: he satisfied for the breach of the law by suffering its penalty; and there is no one so guilty, so destitute of righteousness, but Christ can re-establish him in the eye of the law, and so justify him in the eye of God. It is neither the amount of sin on the part of the sinner, nor the defect of righteousness on the part of Christ, which can exclude any from Heaven, from eternal life. It is not this, then, which makes the gate so narrow; and we must, therefore, look for some other reason why it is called a strait gate, and why so few enter it.

It is strait *because of what it supposes in man* before he can enter it. It is wide enough itself, but it is strait as respects what is required in the persons who have to enter by it. What does it suppose in man? What is necessary in him before he can enter by it?

It requires in the first place, the renunciation of all self-righteousness, and this is a matter of greater difficulty than we are apt to suppose. It is in truth what no sinner will of himself do, or can do. It is not to confess that we are sinners merely. No one who knows what the law of God is, who has but the faintest traces of that law upon his heart, can fail to perceive this, or will refuse to acknowledge it. And hence many suppose that they are renouncing their own righteousness when they make this acknowledgment—that they are not seeking to be justified by the works of the law, but are trusting to the righteousness of Christ. But such an acknowledgment, such a consciousness, does not at all suppose a thorough recognition of the righteousness of God's law, a full homage to that righteousness, and an entire sense of our unrighteousness, or of what that unrighteousness implies. A self-righteous, unhumiliated, spirit, may be perfectly consistent with the most frank and unqualified admission of our want of righteousness, or our frequent transgressions of God's law! Many, therefore, come to Christ in the spirit of self-righteousness, even when to themselves, they appear to be renouncing all self-righteousness. They are not yet spiritually enlightened as to the law of God, and spiritually convinced of their own worthlessness. To feel one's abso-