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STRAIT IS THE GATE.

There is a gateway to heaven through which all must pass, before its blessed mansions can be reached. It has been opened up to us by Christ, or he himself is the gate, as he is called "the way," and in the similitude of the sheepfold "the door". His work it was which procured to sinners of mankind admission into heaven, that secured eternal life to as many as believe in him. He may be called, therefore, the way, or the gate, by which we enter into life. As sinners, the way was completely barred against us, so that we could not possibly obtain an entrance there, but must have remained shut out for ever. An everlasting wall of separation was reared, which we could no more have overleaped, than we could have broken it down. It frowned defiance upon every effort of man himself, to break within the holy precincts. It reached so high that man could not scale it, and was laid so deep that to undermine it, was as impracticable. But Christ opened up a gate thro' it. That wall was the eternal justice of God, through which sin and sinners could not pass. It reached to the infinitude of God; and God must have changed before that wall could be taken down. But what did Christ do to open a gate there? How did he effect this? Not by changing the justice of God, but by satisfying it. He did not bribe God to alter or relax his justice; he made it consistent with the very justice of God that the sinner should enter heaven. The law said to the sinner:—"Thou hast violated my sanctions, thou hast broken my requirements, and thou canst not enter heaven; hell, and not heaven must be thy doom." The justice

of God told the sinner that he had forfeited eternal life, and that heaven and earth might pass away, but that not one jot or tittle of the law should pass away, but should all be fulfilled. Such was the barrier, such was the lofty wall of separation; which no effort of man could break through or over-pass. Now, what Christ did, was, to put himself in the place of the sinner, and fulfil the law which the sinner had broken, and suffer at the same time the penalty which the sinner, by his breach of the law, had incurred; and thus make it as good as if there had been no breach of the law—as honouring to the law and to God that the sinner, notwithstanding his sins should be admitted into heaven; nay, more honouring, for Christ magnified the law, and made it honourable. He put a greater honour upon the law, than if it had never been broken; and instead, therefore, of God being dishonoured by the sinner's being admitted into heaven, he is glorified. His authority, his justice, his holiness, his truth, are all upheld, being more than vindicated. This is the gate which Christ has opened, and thro' which the sinner may pass. The gate is the righteousness of Christ; a righteousness as available, as truly justifying to the sinner, as if it was his own, and with which God is as well-pleased, as if it was the sinner's own. "The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake." He may well be pleased with it, for it is His righteousness. He himself wrought it out. Only, he makes it over to the sinner, puts it to his account. God did not need that righteousness for himself; and herein is the marvellous economy of redemption, that whereas no other being could have wrought out a righteousness