

## **THE STRAIT GATE.**

**Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for I say unto you, many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. Luke 13:24.**

Christ's mission to earth was to save men. It has been truly said that the difference between the anti-Christian and the Christian religions is, that in all of the former, men are seeking after God; in the latter, God is seeking after men. In one sense, Christ has already accomplished the salvation of all. That is, all were lost, and He has found them. More than that, He has purchased them. But His work is not thus finished. He desires to raise them immeasurably above their lost condition, and to render them eternally secure. To do this work, He must have their co-operation. To be saved in the highest sense, men must come to the Saviour. Hence, one important part of His mission was to win followers.

Christianity now is presented to the unbeliever in the most attractive form, and every inducement that can be offered is presented to persuade men to come to Jesus. They are told that it is an easy thing to be a Christian; that they have only to say the word, to make the public confession, join the church, and they are safe. We do not question the benevolence of the motive which prompts this, but we do question both the authority and the wisdom of the plan. Will such work stand in the day that tries by fire?

The Saviour never urged men to come to Him. The truth He taught had sufficient power to draw those who were susceptible to its influence. His words possessed the peculiar property of satisfying the hunger of earth-weary, toil-burdened and desolate hearts. And these are they who are especially [R108 : page 6] invited. The only direct invitations given by Him who came to win ALL, were given to this class. "He that is thirsty, let him come to me and drink."

"Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Only those who feel the need of rest and life can appreciate the invitation. The rich, the popular, those absorbed in business; in brief, all who are content with the things of this life, are scarce likely to leave them for things for which they feel no need. As a rule, the more content we are with earthly things, the less we desire heaven; and God never gives of heavenly things except they are earnestly desired.

When great multitudes followed Him, He turned and said unto them: "If any man come unto me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life, also, he cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost, whether he hath sufficient to finish it? Lest happily after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build and was not able to finish." Luke 14:25-30.

There are many builders in this day of whom that saying is too true. Thrice better had they never begun. Could I be heard, I would say to all: Do not come without counting the cost. It will cost you all that you have and are or ever can be. "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." But if you can afford it, the investment will bring good returns. He would not be certain of success in any earthly profession, who did not apply time, means, heart and mind to the acquiring of his object. Can less be expected of him who lives for God, and who expects to be made like Him?

Why did not Christ urge men to be Christians? Did His great heart feel no pity for the careless, the proud, the wise, and prudent, in their conceit? Why was the gate made so strait that only the most

determined could win an entrance? Thank God, these questions can now be answered.

He was working in harmony with God's plan. The plan is to call out and perfect the church first to be made a blessing to those who are left.

God is not limited, in His dealings with us, to our life here. Man's sin consigned him to the grave. Christ's righteousness brings him back from the grave. Men have long advocated the far-reaching power of the Saviour's death. They have taught that his blood could avail for all. Few have realized the revealed truth that His blood does avail for all. He who gave Himself a ransom for all, thereby has ransomed all, and the due time has now come for this to be testified.

"Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." "God was in Christ reconciling the WORLD unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." The salvation here taught does not depend upon their acceptance of Him. He who laid the foundations of the gospel, laid them broad enough and deep enough to sustain the whole structure of human salvation. Jesus, who worked out His Father's will, had no occasion to be in haste. During the gospel age He is gathering out the jewels for His crown – the church of the first-born. Hereafter, He will take to Himself His great power and reign. Then all the nations whom He has made will come and worship before Him. If our work be guided by a knowledge of His plan, though the results may seem less, they will be more effectual. Above all, let us so live that He may do the work through us, now and hereafter.

L. A. A.

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